

# ***The Beat Within***

THE BEAT WITHIN • A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF WRITING AND ART FROM THE INSIDE • VOLUME 13.41

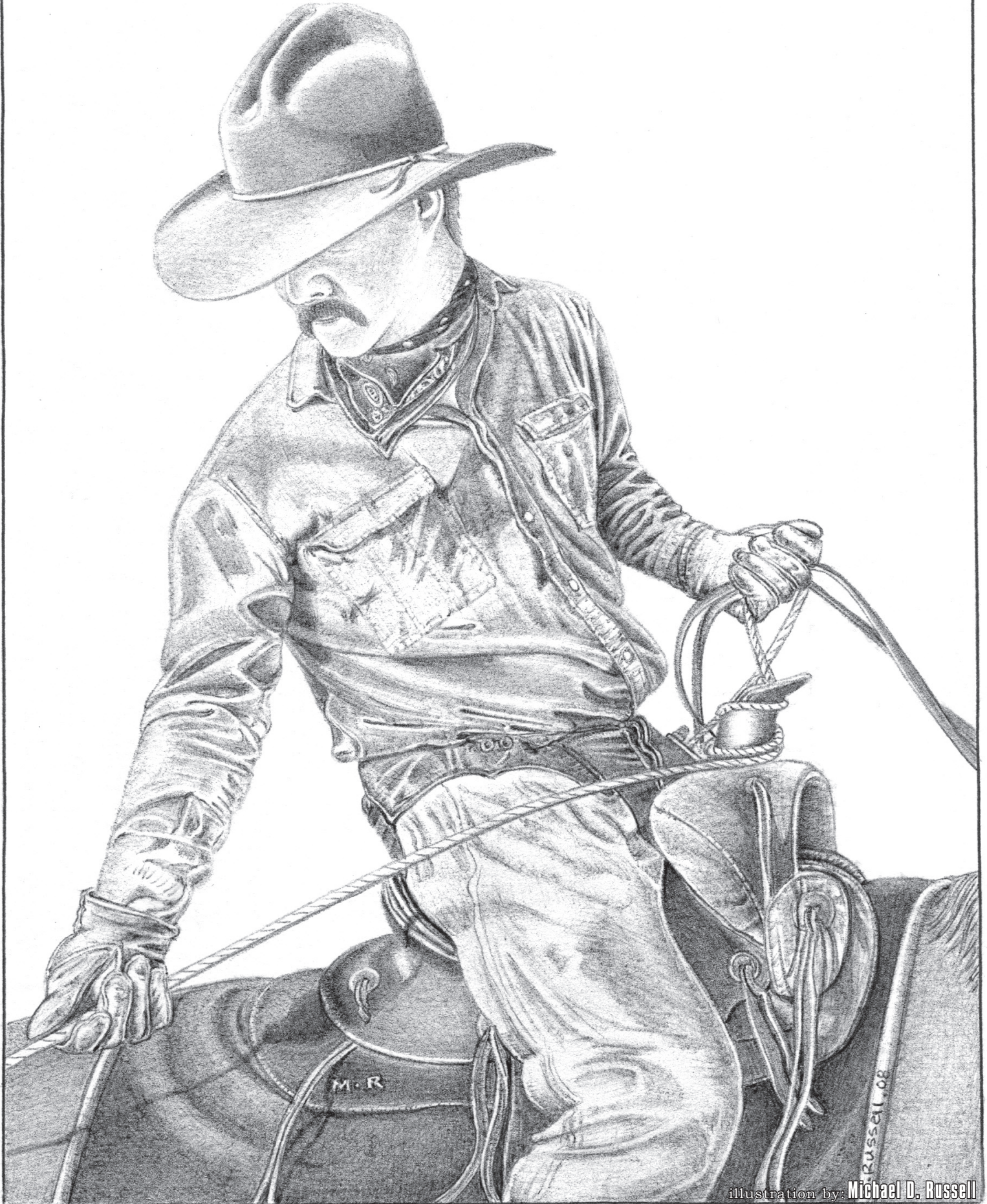


illustration by: Michael D. Russell



**Welcome** editorial note readers to yet another stellar issue of The beat Within. There's a little something in this issue for everyone. We have our Fresno writers, our Oak Hill Washington DC writers, we have Solano, and our great writers from Santa Clara to Santa Cruz, to San Francisco, Alameda to Marin. Plus, The BWO is nothing to take lightly, there are a number of great reads to absorb and learn from. Before you dig into this amazing issue, we appreciate you all taking the time to read the ed. Note. This ed note is a kind of tribute by our colleague and friend ALissa, who will definitely take it from here with her intro and piece...

Hi Beat Within Readers,

This is Alissa Blackman here, and I'm writing to you today to say hello and goodbye. For the past year I've been a workshop facilitator for The Beat in Alameda County. Recently I decided to stop going to the hall and spend more time with my own family. I still work in the office, but I'm going to miss you folks in the hall!

My year in "Juvie" has been an amazing experience, and I send props out to all the inspiring writers there and in the other facilities--without your work this magazine would not exist. It takes a lot to keep writing in the face of the tough circumstances many of you face. But for so many of us, creating visual art or writing is a powerful way we can hear our own voices, step up and speak our visions, shout our complaints, build something clear-eyed and meaningful in this messed up broken world.

After reading and editing The Beat pieces for the past year, I decided I wanted to give something back and share how I've been impacted. On my last night I read this piece to my units, and now we're publishing it here. Without further ado, here it is:

Goodbye Juvie

I thought about how I was going to say goodbye, thought I'd write a rap in answer to all I've been reading and hearing this year. I wanted to show how your words, rhymes, the shapes and sounds of your letters got into my imagination and shook me up, made me take notice. I wanted to show in real time how your courage made mine come forward and say hell I can do this.

I was sitting there letting it flow on the keyboard, feeling all BAD like the streets done really got inside me, and then I was like, That ain't me! I don't know how to write a rap. Feel me? If this is about being true to who you are, I gotta be me too. But your words did get to me—I learned so many things, like a secret code and I just smile cause it is a brilliant language you guys speak, and I thank you for letting me learn a little. (And I love those handshakes, serious. I'm ready to dazzle with my handshaking skills). But all that said, I still gotta tell it to you straight, nothing fancy.

I want to tell you I see your bravery. You folks who write every week. The ones of you who care about your writing and share your story, your opinions, your poems, or who make your pencil drawings from the heart—or mostly from the heart. I see you, and even if you never think of me again, your courage will stay with me and give me courage. And you guys who mess around, write a line and call it a day, I see you too. I know what it's like to face an empty page, and not know how to talk to it. Your ideas all jumbled and confused, refusing to line up, or to not have a thing you want to say. Your struggle with stay with me too, and I wish

you patience and focus. 'Cause in this life it takes patience, focus and follow-through (not to mention courage) to pull yourself out of this mess you stuck in and get yourself onto the path that will help you survive til your old—the path that will give your communities life and help stop all your soldiers from dyin'.

And when I'm with you guys, yeah, I feel like the mother I am. And I think of your mothers. I've dreamed of us all trying to keep our boys and girls safe, in this underground tunnel, trying to find the way out. How much it hurts when your child is in danger. And I hope that you can find some reason—a mama, an auntie, uncle, maybe even a dad or a kid in your life, maybe just your own intelligence shouting: I'm scared as hell and confused and pissed off and I'm bad at change and I'm stuck in this system and in being poor, but I wanna live! I wanna see the sky whenever I please, and do something that's about life and love and not the same old crap. It's gonna be hard but I can do it!

Whatever it is, whoever you find who believes in you, I hope you can find a spot to start scrambling out of that dark tunnel and shock the hell out of everyone and make a legit life for yourself.

I know that's not everyone, I know some of you don't even want it. And to you, I wish you whatever it takes on the inside to help yourself get through this life.

With respect and caring,  
Alissa

**OK, the topics, addressed prior to most of the writing in this issue were, "The best advice I ever gave" - When your homies or family talk to you about their problems, do you ever have suggestions for them, or ways to make them feel better? Do you ever give advice to others that you've learned from your own experience? What's the best advice you ever gave someone? Who did you advise, and did the person take your advice? Did it change his or her situation? What's the best advice you ever gave yourself? Did you take your own advice? Has it made a difference?**

**Our second topic, "An unsolicited act of kindness" - When was the last time you did something nice for someone just because you felt like doing it, and not because they asked you to? Who did you do it for, and what made you want to do it? How did you feel when you did this thing? How did the other person react? Was he or she surprised by what you did? Were you surprised by your own action? So tell us the details about something nice you did for someone else for no particular reason — except that you wanted to.**

**Last but not least, "Having fun without drugs/alcohol" - Can you remember the last time you really had a lot of fun without drinking or taking any drugs? Maybe you went camping with your family, or to the beach with a friend. How old were you at the time? What were you doing that was so much fun, and who were you having fun with? When was the last time you "played" without resorting to chemical assistance? Are there things you would like to do for entertainment that don't involve drugs or alcohol? Give us some examples.**

**Enjoy the read, this issue goes out to our colleague and friend, Alissa, who continues to play a wonderful role in our office, and who did some great-great work as a facilitator in juvenile hall. We'll miss you. The door will always be open for you.**

**The Beat Within**, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

**To our writers:** What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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**Art:** Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

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**Writers:** Thanks to all the participants in our workshops in the San Francisco, Maricopa County Arizona, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Alameda, Bernalillio County New Mexico, Santa Cruz and Marin County Juvenile Halls. If you have any questions or comments about The Beat Within, or if you would like to become a subscriber, contact us at: 275 Ninth St. SF.CA. 94103 or call (415) 503-4170 or check us out at:

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## Writing Workshop

(free every Thursday from 4-6pm)

at **The Beat Within** office

275 Ninth St. (at Folsom)

San Francisco, CA 94103

Facilitated by Beat facilitator Kim Nelson

[kimba@got.net](mailto:kimba@got.net)

## Keep Writing.

Check out the ongoing writing workshops run by beat facilitator Kim Nelson at the office of The Beat Within. Participants will read, write. We'll also look into publishing and performance opportunities.

*Each time he got out it was always, "I'm gunna start fresh with everything!" Yeah right... I'm not 6 years old any more.*

From The Beat: In the third of a new series of writing from Project WHAT! that we're featuring in The Beat, we bring you "Intruder" by Cheyanne T. Project WHAT! — We're Here and Talking — is made up of young people who have experienced one or both parents behind bars. Cheyanne tells a story too familiar to many about absent fathers who try, when they return from prison — usually without success — to become the concerned parents they failed to be until then. For more information, and to access the resource guide, go online to: [www.community-works-ca.org/programs/projectwhat.html](http://www.community-works-ca.org/programs/projectwhat.html), or call at (510) 486-2340. They will mail you a copy of their resource guide, especially if you are a child of an incarcerated parent. The Beat is proud to have these young people share their experiences with our Beat readers.

## Intruder

Ever since I can remember my dad's been away. And every time he got out, I couldn't wait to see him. I never knew why he had been getting locked up and to this day I'm just as clueless as I was at the ages of 6, 8, 9, 11, and 13. If you ask me, that's a lot of time to spend out of your five kids' lives to think you're going to have all the upper hand and authority once you get out.

When I was a little girl, he was always my daddy, even though he was never there. Maybe because I was blind to what a real father was. But it all really hit me last summer. Each time he got out it was always, "I'm gunna start fresh with everything!" Yeah right... I'm not 6 years old any more.

It was June last year and my mom and I were shopping at Target, when I guess she thought it was the right time to dump it on me. "Oh your dad's out, I have his cell number." I decided to take his number and call him. I got no answer so I left a voice mail. As we were leaving Target I got a private call. I picked up. A familiar voice jokingly said, "Who you talkin' to like that on my voicemail?!" It was my dad. We talked for about ten minutes and he asked if I could meet him somewhere in about an hour. My mom said we would be at Food Co. at that time, so he agreed to meet us there. I was so nervous waiting for him. "What if he's old, or fat, or just a totally different person?" These were the thoughts racing through my head. I didn't know what to look for. I didn't know what he would be wearing or driving or anything. Every car that drove into the parking lot made my heart jump. Finally an ugly little bucket car pulls in, and my mom says, "I know that's him"

She was right. To my surprise, the man that got out of the car was the same exact person he had always been. A really tall, really skinny guy. "Hey baby!" he shouts. He walks toward me as I study his appearance. He reaches out to hug me and I do the same. As we're giving each other bear hugs, it was to my bigger surprise that he even smelled the same. A smell that I cannot describe. He still had the same sense of humor that always made me crack up. Except for his receding hairline, nothing seemed to have changed about him. Yet, I soon found out, that his outlook — his out look on me — did.

I don't know why but my mom thought it was a good time to tell him about my new boyfriend. She also decided to tell him that I had asked her if it was ok if he could sleep over earlier that week. My dad flipped out! I hadn't been with him for even ten minuets and he was already lecturing me. I was thinking, "Um excuse me? You! Out of anybody shouldn't be talking about doing the right thing!" I just

nodded my head.

We spoke for a while longer. He told me he wanted me to go with him. My mom agreed. So my dad and I hopped in his car and drove off. We arrived to this ocean front neighborhood. Big fancy houses lined up, facing the sea all with two garages each. We arrived to one of them. A little old lady came out and invited us in. My dad seemed to know her. I'm guessing she was his boss' wife. I followed him in. We sat there and they chatted while I played with her ugly Chihuahuas and drank the no-name brand grape soda she gave me. I don't know why, but I guess everybody thought it was "Let's call out Cheyanne Day." I guess I missed the notice. He started telling the lady (who I didn't even know) what my mom had told my dad about my boyfriend. Now she was telling me off!! "How old are you?" she asked, "They're just getting younger and younger." Dude! what the hell!!

After they were done talking about who knows what, my dad took me home. It had bothered me that he had tried to be such a big part of my life so fast. Yet I never really tripped on it until around my birthday. I was at the movies with my boyfriend and some friends, when my grandma called saying that my dad never came by to help her around the house even though he said he would. I told her I'd call her back. I called him numerous times. He kept ignoring my calls. Eventually he called me back and before I could even bring up my grandma, he starts saying, "I've heard some stuff about you and I don't like it." Man, he should have known the things I'd heard about him! He should have known not to play that game with me dude! I was calling in regards of my grandma, but all he wanted to do is complain and tell me how to live my life.

He started yelling at me, saying that I was putting my personal business out in the open. That I was "promiscuous" if you will. "If your business is getting to me all the way from San Francisco then you're doing something wrong," he complained. I was in awe. That is exactly why I don't put my business out in the open, because of rumors like those. This argument was the final straw. As he went on, I told him I had to go because the movie was starting. I haven't heard from him since that night. Maybe he got locked up the next month. I wasn't going to let somebody point fingers at me without making sure that person's own fingers were clean. He got out a couple months ago and hasn't tried to contact me. I guess I'm in no hurry to call him either.

I want people to realize how hard it is, as a child of an incarcerated parent, to let that parent back into your life after so much time lost. We could try to start over. But he's too stubborn to let what he heard go. What can I say, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

*I wasn't going to let somebody point fingers at me without making sure that person's own fingers were clean. He got out a couple months ago and hasn't tried to contact me. I guess I'm in no hurry to call him either.*





## We Take Care of the Young

Life is strange  
 And we all go through struggle  
 At least I know African Americans  
 We take out our own  
 Mouth to feed our family  
 We make sure the young eat before the older  
 Then if any left  
 And if it's not we eat  
 The crumbs  
 I know it's not fun  
 But we take care of the young  
 And teach them to be young Black Americans  
 Teach them the fundamentals of how to provide for their families  
 When they get older,  
 This generation I'm in now  
 The Black killing Black  
 And the white man loving it  
 Because he wants our land  
 That's why they are raising rent  
 Because they know Blacks struggle  
 Some Black Americans  
 Made it to be lawyers, doctors,  
 And anything else  
 But some choose  
 To stay close with their family  
 To take care of them.

-Frank

From the Beat: Frank, this is a powerful poem that touches on a lot of issues. It's inspiring to read about the commitment to family, particularly young people, that you've grown up with. Is there a way to pursue one's dream (like being a doctor or a lawyer), provide for one's family, and still stay close with the family? It's good to be realistic, but don't limit yourself either.

## My Life, But Never Again

This is my life. My life is rough growing up with no support and my mother leaving me, learning how to become a young man but while in the system.

The only funny part is the system is where I can call a home. I've had two birthdays, 3 square meals, counseling and a bed, and I don't have to commit a crime for it. But not just to say I call Oak Hill home, it's where I developed skills to become the young man that I am.

To this day I regret getting locked up, but now I paint the bigger picture and I look at my life from different shoes.

I was running the streets, no support and a gun to feed myself. But as I was, I was the man. That's how life treats you, I claimed the streets but they didn't claim me. But as me being incarcerated I see my life as a whole new ball game. While I was locked up my mother (who I love to death and was a same sex lover), She moved to Florida and took my brothers.

Now growing up with the system as my legal guardian I have to support myself. I never had my mother say, son I love you, come in and eat, go to bed, good morning. That affects me now, dealing with depression and on my way to a foster family. I realized that God puts us through situations to only make you stronger, so I was put through a lot to become stronger. Being in the criminal justice system I learned how to sleep, how to read, study for my GED, learn mathematics, how you smell if you don't take a shower, how to be responsible for my actions, what to eat, etc. That's why I don't get upset when someone wants my address. I say 3201 Oak Hill Drive.

When I look at my life over and over I see I was put here for a reason.

A few people I hang with and ran streets with now lay 6 feet, and a big section in the metro obituary adding numbers to the count.

I've been locked up now for 10 months and counting. All together adding full time, 1 year and 11 months I spent really growing up and maturing through life. But while being on this journey I've become a Muslim, and as I realize that I pray 5 times a day or 3 to 5 times a day. You start to get answers. I also learned how to forgive the people that I once loved. That's the only way I can move on even though some things are still unanswered, like why my mother just left me and told the system to put me in foster care. Discovering that is like finding a new city. But through the struggle and pain if I had a chance to do it all again I wouldn't.

I will obtain my GED January 7, '09 and then I'm going to college this upcoming year, and then law school. So good things do come out of the bad, the road will lay flat and follow the path. As Muslims say, peace and blessings be upon you.

-Michael

From The Beat: Michael, thank you, truly, for such an honest, candid piece. You have been through a lot but your wisdom and maturity are inspiring. You are definitely proving that good things can come from bad. Take all the things you have learned and developed during your time in the system to make sure that you don't spend any more birthdays in the system. You clearly have a lot going for you. Use your intelligence and your skills and you won't need the system or a gun to provide for yourself. We have no doubt that you can do it. Stay strong, and keep writing.

*I will obtain my GED January 7, '09 and then I'm going to college this upcoming year, and then law school.*

## Their Trap

See it started ever since I was 12 years old. I committed my first crime and that was armed robbery and I was with my older brother. I really did not want to do it but I had no choice. It was peer pressure and I was following my brother because I look up to him, so I thought it was cool and I started coming here back and forth. See I didn't realize what I was doing to myself and my future.

Now I'm 17 and I was still doing the same stuff, but now I see that I messed up my future by getting locked up and wasting time of my life that I won't get back. Now I have a juvenile record and the system was sending me to shelter homes, and all I would do is run, but I see that that's what they wanted me to do. I fell in their trap. They kept sending me home with no help and services.

**-Paul**

**From The Beat: Paul, you've spent a lot of time in the system, but what's more important is that you're learning how you played into the system and set yourself back. Do you have a plan to make sure you don't fall in the trap again? Seek out the services and help you haven't gotten in the past, and be persistent. You might be surprised what you can find. With the right mindset and enough determination, you'll do big things. Stay positive. You're young, and a lot of good things await you still.**

## I Should've Listened

I should've listened to my mother  
When she told me to go to school  
But instead I hit the streets  
Because I thought I was cool  
But wasn't nothing cool about missing out on education.  
Because a couple hours later ended up in a police station.  
Or maybe I should've listened to big brotha  
When he said don't be a follower be a leader.  
But on the streets who cares about being an achiever.  
But they never gave up they stayed believers.  
So now I'm incarcerated going over old times reminiscing  
But whole time I'm thinking, damn I should've listened.

**-Lil' Truck**

**From The Beat: Truck, they say hindsight is 20/20, and your poem is a great example of how clear our mistakes are when we look back on them. The goal is to learn from these mistakes and make better decisions the next time around. Like you said, there's "nothing cool about missing out on education." Share your insight with others, and make sure you get that education too!**

## My Life as Lewis

Growing up as a boy I felt as if I was an outsider. I remember being picked on as a boy because I wasn't as thorough as the kids in the neighborhood. So a lot of the time I hung by myself while my sister had fun with everybody. This made me feel as if I wasn't a human being like Lil' Wayne said "we are not the same I am a Martian."

I felt as everyone around me including my family cared only about my sister. So as I got older I felt I had to be like everyone in my neighborhood.

When I went to school, and went outside my community I would act out as if I was one of them. So when I moved, like some people I got into the streets, doing what I saw others doing. Now I am at a point in my life where I'm making up for lost time. From yours truly,

**-Lewis**

**From The Beat: Lewis, this piece shows that you're a thoughtful young man with a strong sense of yourself. You've realized that you were doing things for the wrong reasons, things that weren't really in your character. Now that you've recognized this, the exciting part is moving forward. Have confidence in yourself and be the person you know you are. You have a lot to share with the world.**

## The Streets

The streets seem cool when you're young but when you grow up you will find out that the streets are really dumb. But it's hard to tell when young 'cause it seems pretty fun. But I try to tell all the little youngins around my way but they don't listen to me because they say "Who are you to tell anything? You just came from Oak Hill not too long ago."

I say the past is the past and the future is here, so now get on your way and go to school and be something in life, little youngin'.

**-Lil' Josh**

**From The Beat: Josh, keep sharing your experiences with others. You know from experience that young people aren't always trying to listen and are more interested in the fun of the moment. But you never know when your words make an impression. You're doing the right thing by learning from your past and moving forward. Like you say, "the future is here." We look forward to hearing about the great things ahead for you.**

## Jail

Jail is something you can't always bail  
Some people just don't give a hell  
Jail is like a painful nail  
Some people say 'I just took an L'  
As the cell gets cold at night you won't stop biting your nails  
As you shiver and quiver as you go to sleep  
The darkness won't help,  
You need the heat  
As you and your feet begin to meet  
You won't have an appetite to feed your greed  
Some people I would say feed your need  
Because the floors will make you lean  
Your toes will meet your spleen  
You won't be able to do you,  
So listen to the guards, they will choose  
Keep you or defeat you is what they do  
Try not to spill, just stay true  
As the light comes new  
And as the sky comes blue  
When you awake you feel brand new

**-Anton**

**From The Beat: Anton, we like the rhymes, and like the positive ending of your poem even more. As dark and cold as some of those nights get, there is always a new morning on the way, and your poem is an inspiring reminder of this. There will also be a morning when you're not waking up in a cell, and once you get there, hopefully you'll never look back. Thanks for writing, and please keep creating and sharing.**

## Living As a Black Male in DC

Living as a black male in DC you gotta be tough and humble  
'Cause everyday is like a royal rumble  
And I don't know but it seems like a lot of people are confused  
Ain't nobody trying to go to school  
They would rather be a fool  
Thinking carrying guns and smoking drugs is cool  
And what goes around comes around  
So for people who rob  
What goes up, must come down  
And another thing,  
Ain't nobody trying to work in these streets  
They would rather get locked up and work for cheap.

**-Joel**

**From The Beat: Joel, this is a great poem. You speak to something that a lot of people don't think about, and that's the fact that people who are incarcerated often end up working for very little money while behind bars. Finding a job on the outside can be hard, but your poem does a good job of reminding us that it's much better than the alternative.**

## Me and My Mans

I want to write about me and my mans  
Trapped in the street life and failed to make plans  
Money and girls is all that we know  
But we are still young in time we will grow  
Reppin' our block it feels so good  
Wondering one day will I move from the hood  
I love my hood 'til the day I die  
I was born and raised so don't ask why  
But I still have a plan to be someone  
One day I will walk without my gun  
I'm going to be a business man real soon  
And make things better  
For me and my goons!

**-Leonte**

**From The Beat:** Leonte, what an incredible poem! It's simple but very powerful and very moving. We love that you have goals for success, and plans to look out for the people close to you. Your piece shows a lot of wisdom, and you are growing constantly, even if you don't realize it. Keep growing!

## Things Happen

My first time getting locked I was shocked that I was really in jail. I know my mother was about to explode. I wasn't scared I just thought jail was like it was in the movies but it wasn't. The C.O.'s were cool.

That day before I got locked up I was having a bad day. Then me and my friend met this old guy in the park, he was an undercover police. He locked me up and he tried to catch my man but he got away.

My mother always told me "don't be a follower be a leader." The message of my short story is that the system is not meant for people or any race, it's meant for animals. So try to stay out of it.

**-Mike**

**From The Beat:** Mike, thank you for the direct, wise words. The system is a place that everyone should try to avoid. Your decision to share your mother's words of wisdom makes us think that being a follower led to you getting locked up. Take her advice: be a leader! And stay out of the system. Thanks for writing. Keep it up.

## The Streets is Hard

The streets so hard it makes me think.  
Everywhere you look it's beef.  
When I'm in the streets I smoke weed  
If I was in the streets something might have happened to me.  
I say that jail saved me.  
The streets is hard  
They make me can't sleep.  
The streets is hard for me.

**-Dawayne**

**From The Beat:** Dawayne, it's a scary reality that jail can be a refuge from what's going on in the streets. How can you find safety from the streets without being incarcerated? You're intelligent and thoughtful, and you deserve a safe place to be yourself and still be free.

## Dear The Beat Within: Never Again

I will never come back to Oak Hill because I can't see my family. And I will never promise myself anything if I don't think I can keep the promise. I push myself forward so I can make good promises to stay in the community.

**-Dalyon**

**From the Beat:** Dalyon, this is an interesting and mature point. It's important to set realistic goals. But that doesn't mean to give up or have low standards. It's like you say, you need to push yourself forward, and make good promises.

## What I Need To Do

I'm from Savannah Terrace (in DC)—the good, it's a nice neighborhood, nice people, nice homes, nice apartments, a lot of old people and disabled people.

The bad part is that three ladies are suffering with AIDS. The police are coming around harassing, and they take your money from you, beat you up, and make it seem like you snitchin'.

I've been living there my whole life.

When I was a youngster coming up, I was a football player. I played wide receiver for my father's Woodland Raiders and Woodland Tigers. I played for seven years and got twelve trophies.

What I like about football is you get a lot of your anger out and you get to go places out of town, meet a lot of different people with a lot of talents, plus it's fun.

Smoking weed put my football career on hold, I started last year. I started slacking, started getting into trouble and got locked up. What I need to do is do what I got to do, go to school and more activities to keep me off the streets and away from the beef.

**-Dawayne**

**From The Beat:** Dawayne, it sounds like football was a rewarding of your life that helped you do exactly what you said you need to now: stay off the streets. If it was weed that put all that on hold and led to you getting in trouble, it sounds like you should stop smoking. Make specific plans and goals for yourself. School is definitely an important part, but so are activities like football. Good luck.

## How I'm Making a Change

When I first got stepped back I was mad I got put down Oak Hill. I was not on a program unit and when I was on the unit I was like "Man I'm not going to change I'm going to do me."

So then like four weeks later they told me that I had to go on a program unit, I was mad but I was still not going to change. So they put me on Genesis 10B and I started off good at first then I started doing bad so when I was thinking and praying I was like "man I'm going to change," so I started doing good in school, staying on honor roll, getting good grades, doing what I have to do.

So then I was still mad about things because when I was out there I was doing some bad things like disrespecting my mother and things and running off on my baby. But as I was saying man I did some thinking and I think about how I hurt my mother, but if I could take it back I would because my mother is the best. I also was thinking about change because I had a baby out there and I ran off on him and that's why I'm changing. But to all the people that is reading this man I'm doing so good right now I'm on my way out of school and to college and when I was out there I was not thinking about some of the things that I got from down Oak Hill.

I'm on my way out of Oak Hill and I'm going to show people how Genesis showed me how to change. I'm also getting a job when I get out there but for now I'm on level 4 and Oak Hill really showed me how to change because I know I'm a changed person now, because at first I was disrespecting people and just doing me, but now I'm doing so good so I hope whoever is reading this takes this to the head for real.

**-Andre**

**From The Beat:** Andre, thanks for sharing your story of personal change with us. It's encouraging, and we can tell you're proud of how well you're doing. We're glad you were able to turn a negative into a positive and get so much out of your time away from the community. Keep this momentum going as you transition back home. Remember this pride and excitement that you're feeling. It's only the beginning for you as you pursue your goals.



## When I Was Young

When I was young  
I had a lot of dreams  
That I wanted to achieve  
But now it seems like  
I can't achieve them  
'Cause I've been getting locked up since I was 12  
It's hard where I come from  
For some of us  
We have to survive  
By ourselves  
And some of us have family  
To be there but  
Some feel like we have to do it  
Even though we don't.  
Just wanted to fit in with the crowd.  
Now that we're trying to fit in the crowd  
We get in trouble,  
Like stealing cars, robbing, dealing and  
Other exotic things that we don't need to do.  
But down Oak Hill you feel like you can't  
Make it but just  
Put your mind to it and you can make it anywhere.  
It's not hard  
To want to learn  
From mistakes  
And go for what you  
Wanted to achieve in life.  
You can still do it.  
It's up to you my friend.

-Tye

**From The Beat:** Tye, we love the encouragement that you're offering readers. First we were worried when you talked about having dreams when you were young, because you're still young! And you can certainly achieve your dreams still, as you know. It's also important that you're learning to be your own person, and not to do things just to fit in. Keep sharing your optimism with those around you.

## It Been Hell

My life through the system, man this been a long trip. I been getting locked up since I was 12 years old, and the judge was like "what?" Man all my charges been major crimes. The system messed my life all up. I wished I never got locked up. Man I'm keeping it real.

-Weezy B.

**From The Beat:** Weezy B, age 12 is definitely an early start in the system, and we can see how it would affect you. If you start going back and forth early on, you can start to think that it's normal, or something that's supposed to happen. The system may be responsible, but it's not the system that will have to do the time. What can you do to make sure you don't get caught up again? Hopefully this can be the end of your long trip through the system.



*It hurts me to know that I belong to the government, and they make money off me. It's just basically about money, that's why they do what they do.*

## Making Money Off Us

Basically, my life through the system has been discouraging to me. Why I say that, because it was my fault for making the wrong move, or mistake that I did. I ain't going to lie though, it's been rough for me as an individual, because I'm used to being around my family or friends, who care for me.

Down the hill, in my eyes, you probably got somebody who's rolling with you or something, but it's every man for himself, especially if your vics down here heavy. All I'm saying is being locked up is not cool, and especially being in the system, and knowing that them people is making money off you. They do you dirty, put you on probation, and know that you're going to violate, and come back, basically setting you up for failure. When you fail, you get consequences that don't even contain your problem that's going to hurt you at that moment. I'm talking little crimes, and doing mountains of time for that floozy problem.

Me though, on the other hand, I been in the system for a few years. It hurts me to know that I belong to the government, and they make money off me. It's just basically about money, that's why they do what they do. Like commit you, and mess you up for life, committing you to an older age, for the years they get paid that high amount of money.

I've been getting incarcerated since I was twelve, but I hadn't been in for months, like I am now.

I've been locked up, for about seven months now, and it hurts me, to know that I'm away from my loved ones. This system is horrible, and needs to stop focusing on money they make off us, they hustling, locking us up for money. I wish I never got incarcerated. They're hurting us young men.

-Lil' Mike

**From The Beat:** We like that you're taking responsibility for your actions but also aware of the bigger problems with the system that affect you. What can you do to avoid getting caught in the system? If it's too easy to violate while on probation, how can you put yourself in a situation to make sure you don't? Use your time in the system to figure these things out, so you'll never have to be away from your family again.

## The First Book I Ever Read

The first book was "True to the Game." It's my favorite book. The first time I read was when I was locked up. I tried to read a thousand books and none of them interested me so the CO brought me "True to the Game." The first day I started to read I was happy and when I finished I was even more happy because I saw that I knew how to read. After that I started reading every book that came my way and I read True to The Game 1, 2, and 3.

-Huff

**From the Beat:** Huff, thanks for sharing your story. We really got a sense of your excitement, to realize you'd read an entire book by yourself, and enjoyed it! It's also interesting that it wasn't until you got locked up that you read, because while we never want to see anyone locked up, reading is something we strongly encourage. Hopefully your love for reading sticks with you, and you'll read out in the community, too!



### Bullets Know No Names

Last night seemed like a dream, as I hide at my homegirl's house, while the ghetto bird searches the sky. This is how it all started.

It was a Wednesday, I woke up to the sound of my homeboy calling me. "Ey homeboy. You gonna kick it at the park?"

"Yea, let me zip up my khakis and lace up my stars." I replied. I jumped in the shower real quick and got dressed quickly. I remember I was wearing my white t-shirt, my khaki shorts, gold toes and my white chucks. I got a snack real quick and was heading towards the front door when I remembered what I was missing.

Back in my room, I lifted up my mattress and looked at the new gun I had purchased the day before. I quickly checked the magazine. I shoved it into my waistband and headed out the door. Walking down the street, I noticed that it was a nice summer day. A car pulls out of the parking lot across the street, packed full of people. As I turned onto another street the same car passes by and I saw the faces of my enemies.

Now I was certain they knew who I am. They made a U-turn aiming the car at me. It came screeching down the road heading straight at me. Once they came within a certain distance. I lifted up my shirt, revealing my gun. When they noticed what was about to happen, the car quickly swerved, nearly missing a parked car as they drove away. I continued to walk towards the catwalk. I could see my homies already hanging out at the park. As I got closer, I greeted my homeboy while we proceeded to the bathroom. Inside that bathroom there were various tags.

One of the most notable tags was "Welcome to the Bottoms" and next to it, my hood was spelled out. I told my homeboy what had happened to me and he told me they had tried something like that earlier that week. Because of this he wanted to make sure that I was strapped. As we both came out the bathroom. I noticed one of the moms was staring at us. She quickly glanced at my tattoos and made her way over to us.

Without hesitation, she asked us why we weren't in school and what gang we belonged to. We both denied our affiliation but we could tell she wasn't falling for it. She asked if either of us were carrying weapons, again we said no. She then asked us to move away from the children. We walked over to another table where my homeboy and my homegirl were and sat down. As we were smoking and talking I saw across the park the same car creeping by. But I didn't think anything would happen.

The car continued around the park and made its way toward us. As they yelled out of the car window, my homeboy grabbed me and pulled me to the ground. Boom. Boom. Boom. It was the sound of the car passenger unloading his gun at us. I got to my feet as I fired back. Bllaaaat went my automatic. Once the shooting had stopped, I could hear the screams. As I looked around, I saw blood going down to the bottom side of the playground slide.

That is where I saw the mom screaming as she held the body of her lifeless son. As I stood there frozen, my homegirl grabbed me and pulled me away. We ran back to the apartments, as I hide away. All the while, I kept replaying it all over again in my mind. The mom was hunched over the bottom of the slide holding her son. I kept replaying what she had said to us while I can still hear the voices of the shooter as he laughed, while they drove away.

### -Hiding, Santa Clara

**From The Beat:** What a tragedy! What a horror that could have been prevented, that was ironically anticipated by the mother? No, bullets know no names and care about no one it strikes. This story has taught us a lesson, all over again.

### The Idiots Are Taking Over

Now is not the right time to be sober

The idiots have taken over and are spreading like social cancer

Is there an answer?

Ironically, Mensa membership exceeds expectations, tell me why?

How are all the stupid people breeding?

Watson, it's really elementary,

The industrial revolution has flipped a B on evolution

The benevolent and wise are being thwarted, ostracized

What a bummer the world keeps getting dummer

Insensitivity is standard and faith is being fancied over reason

Darwin is rolling over in his coffin

The fittest are surviving much less often

Everything seems to be reversing

And it's worsening

Someone flopped a steamer in the gene pool

Now angry mob mentality is no longer the exception, it is the rule.

I'm starting to feel a lot like Charlton Heston

Stranded on Planet Apes

With orangutans who run it to the ground with general and the armies who obey them

Followers following fables and philosophies that enable rule without regard

There is not use for democracy when ignorance is celebrated

Don't work in mental institutions

Sometimes the smallest and softest voice carries grand solutions

What are we left with?

A nation of god-fearing, pregnant nationalist

Who feel it's their duty to populate the homeland, pass on traditions

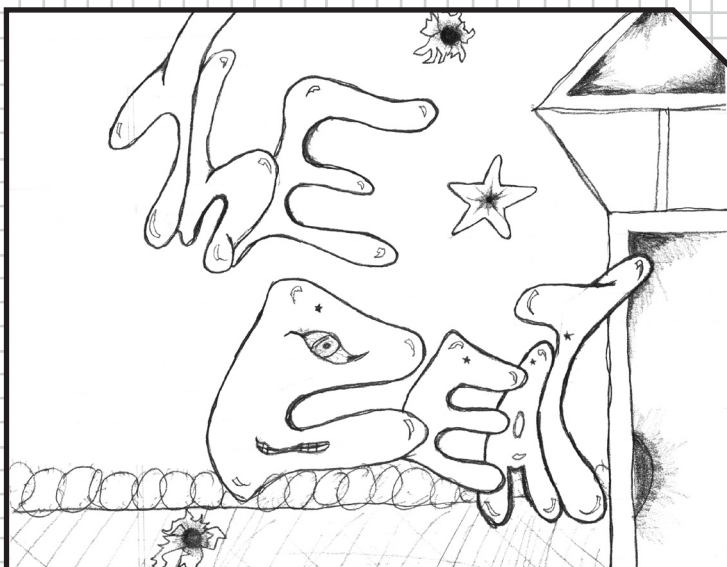
Live by how to get ahead religions

And prosper via simpleton culture

The idiots are taking over.

### -Skate and Destroy, Santa Clara

**From The Beat:** We feel terrible that a young person like you live in an environment where there are more contradictions and intensely opposite messages than anyone should be subjected to. We would like to take part of the blame because we, the older generation, have some responsibility for improving conditions for those in need and finding solutions to the problems. With that said, the dizzying phenomenon that you've described will NOT go away without the hard work, intelligent thinking, and unity of rational and benevolent people.



### Having Fun Without Drugs/Alcohol

What up Beat, it's me, Victoria again! For today's topic I'm going to write what I remember about having fun without drugs/alcohol. A time that I remember is when I first got with my boyfriend (Grizzly). Me and him are both addicts.

For some reason, me and him dropped all our friends and all the drugs. All we wanted to do was just to be with each other every day. We were happy and we fell in love. All we would do is eat, watch TV, spend time with my family, and lay down with each other all day. I used to be the party girl, but when I got with him, he was all I needed to keep me happy. When me and him relapsed that's when our relationship went downhill. Everything went all bad with each other emotionally and physically.

Recently I was on house arrest and I was on the run. Well to make the story short, I ended up turning myself in 2 weeks later. I found out he got busted for sales and under the influence. So now he's in here with me. I'm so happy now cause we're both in the right mind and hopefully he thinks about getting his act together like me. So when we both get out, we can be happy again. Ya feel me! If he won't do it, I will.

I will not let him bring me down again. I love him with all my heart. The way things were going I wasn't happy. It hurts to let the one you love go. I know what's right. I have to get my priorities straight first. The faster I can help myself, the faster I can help him. Well, that's all I got for right now. The one and only!

**-Victoria, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** You have a very sensible and mature perspective, Victoria. It's not always easy to see straight when you're in love, but it seems like you're able to really see clearly how addiction sent your relationship spiraling. We hope that you succeed in helping yourself, and hopefully your boyfriend will be able to pull himself out of the hole, too.

### Having Fun Without Drugs Alcohol

It was last Thursday, and I was at my dad's in San Luis Obispo and my dad let me go the farmers' market with my friends. Farmers' market is like a street fair but it's like just on a really long street and it's crowded with people. That day was really fun because I was sober and not under the influence with any drug.

I was surprised that I was clean because I'm usually dirty and I'm always drunk or high. All I know is that was the best day I had. I got to go shopping, eat a lot of food, and drink soda, and dance.

I was 15 years old, that's how old I'm now. The things I like to do that entertain me that don't involve drugs are my friends, my cousins, and my boyfriend when he comes to visit me. The things I like to do for fun are playing catch with the football with my friends or hanging out with my family. That's why when I see my little nieces or nephews going to do something bad, I tell them no or I give them advice that I know won't let them go into the life I'm in now because I don't want to see them get hurt or in trouble.

My cousins always listen to the advice I give them because they look up to me. I just don't want to see them in Juvenile Hall like I am now. The advice I give to my friends, my cousins, or my boyfriend, they listen. Or I think they listen, but as long as they take it, I'm happy, and all I want is to see my friends, boyfriend, and family happy.

**-Tasha, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Did the experience you had at the farmers' market make you consider giving up (or at least cutting back) on drugs and alcohol? You said it's the best day you've had, which is saying a lot. Why do you think it was so great?

### Still Lingers

The avenger of my crimes,  
the redeemer of my sins,  
the angel of death

- a sickle in one hand,  
a skull in the other.

The end is near.

No one to blame but myself.

The inner voice I didn't follow.

The bees of hate consumed my desire for a crime-free life.

The earth's mood has changed.

Panic strikes everyone as the angel descends.

Nowhere to run.

I'm in a cage.

Impulse compelled me.

Now I'm scared.

Like a baby, I whimper.

I think about living the good life

but my custom of performing felonious capers still lingers.

**- Mr. Anonymous, Santa Cruz**

**From The Beat:** Some good writing in here Mr. Anonymous. Capers and lingers is a great "off-rhyme". And there are others. Next time you hear that inner voice, listen carefully. It might save you a lot of pain.

### Past Problems

Well, I'm going to share something about my life and the problems that I've gone through due to the streets, drugs and alcohol.

Being on the streets, doesn't bring anything good. They get you into problems with your friends and family.

There was a time when I was with my brothers in a car, and had an accident and I was injured. My brother died in the accident. I'm sorry and it hurt from the bottom of my heart. I'll never forget my homie, who is in my heart. I'll always remember him. He was on alcohol.

One time we didn't have money and we robbed a guy. We took his money and bit him. We drank until the next morning with that money.

Being on alcohol, drugs or gangs are bad. I ask God to get me away from all the bad thing, to have mercy on me and to help me get out of jail.

God is love and with Him everything is positive.

**-Dixon, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** There are the things that always have to be expected when driving under the influence of alcohol. You were lucky you didn't lose your life as well. All you've done has been caused by alcohol and it has marked your life. You should find a solution to your problems. Before you end up your life or get jailed. We recommend you a program called AA (Alcoholic Anonymous). They can help you a lot like they've helped so many others.

### The Best Advice I Ever Gave

The best advice I ever gave to someone was not to get in a car with someone that has been drinking. It was at a party, and my friend was going to leave with her sister who had been drinking. I told her to stay, and I would get her home. By the time I got her home, her sister was not there. She told me that she probably went somewhere real fast. The next morning she called me and told me her sister died in a car accident.

**-Nuñez, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We're making this short piece a Piece Of the Week because it's so important that others read about this terrible experience. Young people often think that this can't happen to them, but when it does, they're gone forever! You are very smart to know not to drive drunk and not to ride with someone who has been drinking. The risks are far too high.



### Can't Understand How Love Blinds

I am going to start talking about my life. When I was ten my mom and dad separated and my life totally changed because I was basically a kid when they did that.

My mom met this guy and fell in love with him. So that is when our lives changed because we moved to Kerman. At first he treated me as his own daughter but after two years I was sexually molested by him.

After that happened I told my mom but she didn't believe me. But after that I ran away for two years straight and when I came back she was still living with him.

Sometimes I still can't understand how love blinds you. When I came back my step-dad asked me to forgive him for what he did to me.

**-Adriana, Fresno**

*From The Beat: We are so sorry that you have been hurt by the decisions others have made around you. No one is telling you that you don't have the right to be hurt and angry about your situation. We recognize how hard it is to see someone making decisions that hurt themselves and can't see it happening. We hope that you use this experience to learn how to live your life, and remember how much your decisions have an effect on others too. Take care of you!! Seek support!*

### An Unsolicited Act Of Kindness

The last time I did something nice for someone was about four weeks ago before I was detained. It's this senior citizen a couple of houses down from my grandma, and she always goes grocery shopping. She looks really fragile, so every time I see her trying to carry groceries, I go and help her carry them.

She tries to offer me money, but I never accept it because if I did I would feel guilty and that just isn't right. Every time I see her struggling, trying to carry things up to her steps, I help her. She has nieces and nephews and grandchildren, but they don't have the audacity to be courteous if they see their own blood struggling,

I feel good when I offer someone help and when I offer from my heart wholeheartedly, not expecting something in return like some people do. It makes me feel good because whenever I do a good deed for someone, I know a thing called karma (what goes around comes around), so when I help others, I know that one day someone will help me when I most need it.

I am not surprised by my actions because I have a good heart, and whenever I see someone in need, my intentions are to help them wholeheartedly because I tend to treat others how I would want to be treated.

**-Jenaeya, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: If everybody lived by that Golden Rule (treating people the way you want to be treated), what a wonderful world this would be! We need people with your kind heart and fine brain to be out here helping our communities! We don't know what behavior has led you here, but we can see that you are mature enough to figure out what you have to do (and what you have to stop doing) in order to live the life you want to live rather than the life a bunch of strangers want you to live. You're wise, and a word to the wise should be enough!*

### Brown/Black/White

What up, Beat? It's your boy Cry-Baby making new poems. I'm Cry-Baby and you are some snitch in the mirror Saying "Can you see me?"

I was brown when I stare,

Black when I walk,

And some of them said I was white when I talk.

I speak the truth. Can you hold your thought?

People tell you lies - here and there,

But don't give up.

**-Cry-Baby, Fresno**

*From The Beat: Yes, you are right: Don't give up. Keep looking toward the future.*

### A Leaf Fallen From A Tree

Who am I

I'm just another leaf fallen from a tree

On this tree not every leaf is green

But, you may find every color in between

We all fall from the same tree but come from different scenes

We may grow from the same roots but we're not on the same team

In this corrupt world where everything cost

It even cost to have a dream

We come from bad places filled with gunshots

A woman screams

We beat up on each other to let out some of this hateful steam

We never learned to cope in this world without being mean

Babies having babies, teens killing teens

Is this how we respect the dream of Martin Luther King?

Listening to rap songs...

Rather than, sit and hear the choir sing

**-Willie, Fresno**

*From The Beat: Colorful leaves may fall and land softly under the tree as some are blown far away, and as they may be blown back under the tree. Many leaves are stepped on and crumbled. Some leaves are restored and framed and some are raked and bagged away often to be put in the soil once more. Exam the purity of the lines, the variety of color and appreciate the differences. Listen carefully for the rustling, crumbling and look for the beauty, listen for the sounds of laughter, of a wise one speaking, of children playing, of the much varied music and art where ever it may land. Thank you for your introspective words, and the sounds of the movement of your leaf.*

### A Sober Moment

Well, to start off, it's the homeboy coming through once again. I was in some program called the mentor program associated with FLY (Fresh Lifelines for Youth). They tried to show me that's there's better things in life than to be on the streets and get messed up. I know the most thrilling event was going white water rafting in Sac. The mentor program is like you have a person that has a similar drug past as you, and they volunteer without getting paid to take you to the movies or similar stuff on the outside.

Every month they have a big event when the whole program goes. So we drove to Sacramento like five carloads deep to hit the river up there. It was the most fun that I've experienced in my young life. We hit like mini waves. Then the last class of the river we hit was like a class 4+, which is like the biggest ones you go against. The raft behind me couldn't handle it, and a guy from our program flew like six feet in the air and hit the water. We turned our raft around and started paddling upstream. Then I put out my oar, which is the paddle, and got him. I grabbed him by the life jacket and pulled him in. So the event was fun, and my raft was full of females so I had a fun, sober day.

Other than that we been horseback riding, laser tagging, go-cart racing, and many more stuff like baseball games. I enjoyed the year that the program had to offer me. I had a good experience and made a good role modeling-friend, which was and at the moment still is my mentor. So to all homeboys that enjoyed my story, stay up, ey and do your time. Don't let it take a hold of you.

**-Chango, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: This is one of the best descriptions of a program we have ever read in The Beat. It's full of details that make the piece exciting. It sounds like you have had some wonderful experiences that you might never have been able to enjoy if you hadn't been in FLY. There are so many ways young people could have fun for free without having to get drunk or high to enjoy them, and you have listed many of those ways in this fine piece. You even found a friend, and what could be better than that? Thank you for this. It made us jealous because we weren't able to go with you!*

*I thought I had nothing so I wouldn't care about dying for my barrio.*

### My New Home

Hey, what's up Beat? How you been? Me, I'm back, but now it might be for good. If you're still wondering who this is, it's Cash coming straight out of the max. Well Beat, I'm in a messed up situation right now in here for murder charges. I don't know what to do. I sit in my cell thinking to myself, "Is this karma for all the bad things I did in life?"

Shhh! Your boy is stressing out here. I don't want to do life. I'm only 16 years old. As I sit in my cell and think to myself, I'm going to lose everything: my freedom, my family, my six-month baby girl. And the screwed up thing is I only got to see her two times while I was out. I feel lost and helpless. The only thing that makes me happy is the noise that my baby girl makes as I hear her through these messed up phones. Man that's messed up. Beat

Do you think that the system should take my whole life away? I don't know what to do. All the anger I've got. I want to go off on somebody hella bad. I sit in my room and listen to my roommate tell me stories about what he going to do when he gets out, and it makes me sad 'cause I might not see the light again. I sit in my cell and think about the place I grew up in. I had a bad life, now that I sit down and think about it. See Beat, it was hard for me out there. I felt like every time I went out on the streets, I was in danger of my life, so I always had to pack something, even if it was a knife. I really didn't care about what happened to me. I already been to YA, and now I'm going to prison, probably for life.

My life went by too fast. I remember playing catch and out of nowhere I'm slinging 20 sacks. I was always on a mission just to cat and find a place to sleep. It was hard. I even moved out of my house and moved in with my jaina. Well, hella shhh has happened in the 'hood. A lot of people dying and they thought I had something to do with it. And it makes me sad 'cause every night I would come home to my jaina and spend time with her.

Damn Beat, it went by too fast. I miss her. She was the only person I really thought that cared about me. Every time I would leave the house and she seen me take my little one, she knew I was going to get into some shhh. I should've listened to her when she used to say to me, "Don't do any thing stupid!" I loved her and now that I'm locked up, I never took the time to really look at what I had. I thought I had nothing so I wouldn't care about dying for my barrio. But now that I have a lot of time to stop and think, I lost a lot. So I sit down in my cell and think, and it haunts me day and night (25 to life is my deal). I lost a great deal of love with the ones I thought I wouldn't care about

**-Lil' Cash, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We appreciate everything you've written here. The trouble with being a child is that you think as a child, which means you don't think about what you might lose until it's gone. And then you grow up very fast, but too late. We don't know if you did the thing you're accused of, Lil' Cash, but we'd like you to do something, if you have the courage to do it. If there are dead bodies involved, we'd like you to think about what that side of the story is thinking about. Think of all that you are missing, and then try to think about what the families you might have left behind are missing. Are their feelings of pain and loss worth less than yours? We wish you were not in this situation, and we know how easy it is to fall into the pattern you describe. But since you have fallen into this reality, we want to urge you to think about the "them" — the other human beings who through your actions are left wondering what life might have been, just as you are wondering the same thing.

### Fun Without Drugs/Alcohol

The most fun recently that I had without drugs or alcohol was hitchhiking from Eugene, Oregon to Willits, California. I was walking down I-5 South. Behind me was my road dog Shaggy, walking hella slow because of his cat having to go to the bathroom. All of a sudden I looked up and a car was pulled over about a half mile in front of me.

I took off running and Shaggy and I got in the car. It was hot and my dog was panting real hard. We drove for a couple of hours and pulled over at a rest stop. I took my dog out for water and the bathroom and saw this guy. I started talking to him and he told me he was going to Willits. The other guy was only going to Redding, so we said thank you and got into the other guy's car. His name was Chris.

We drove with him for about nine hours straight, through the redwoods and down the 101 South Coastal view. It was beautiful. We stopped at a beach on the way, first time my puppy ever went to the beach. And we made it to S.F. the next day. It was a good long ride.

**-Olivia, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for taking us on this ride with you. We wonder, if you had done the same trip either stoned or drunk, what unpleasant things might have happened, so we appreciate the message here that you can have adventures without a drop of alcohol or a toke on a blunt. We wish you hadn't turned your adventure into one behind locked doors, though. Who is taking care of your puppy now? Where is Shaggy?

### An Unsolicited Act Of Kindness

'Bout the time I was in Subway, a lady dropped some money on the floor. I walked over to her and picked it up and gave it back to her. She was happy that I did that for her.

Well, I went in line to order my food and I needed a dollar or 50 cents, and I asked the guy that was next. He said he ain't got no money left, so I was like ok. Then I was leaving Subway and the lady was like, "Here is the dollar that you need." I said, "No thank you. I don't need it."

I told her, "No thank you." Then she said, "No, take it." So finally I took. The lady left the store. I walked out with her. I told her that she dropped some money. She said, "No, that's yours," and she gave me a hug and told me, "God bless you," and walked off.

**-Quintara, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** This is a wonderful story on several levels. The first, of course, is that you did the right thing by not pocketing the money you found, but giving it back to the woman who dropped it. But what's even better, your story shows that people respond to kindness and gene

### Taking Advice

In the eight months that I've been here I've learned to take advice and apply it to my life. I've learned how to accept advice that I don't always agree with.

I try to give others advice but they don't always accept it. And sometimes I've noticed that I give advice to people that I should apply to myself, but I don't always do that.

In these eight months I've learned that no one's too good or knows so much that they can't accept advice to better themselves or someone else. But that's all I have on taking advice.

**-Mobchylid, Solano**

**From The Beat:** Good advice. Maybe people should have to test run their own advice on themselves before they're allowed to give it. Or maybe it's even more important to be able to listen, not to just do whatever someone says, but to hear the advice and decide for yourself if it's right for you.



### Still On My Mind

I'm currently confined, only free within my mind  
 Gone but never forgotten, vivid images I rewind  
 Your lips against mine, eyes locked, fooling time  
 Silently my heart bleeds  
 Accepting it won't cease  
 Our separation is a fact  
 Walls and bars attached  
 I imagine your presence  
 Tu firme cholo essence  
 Memories I grasp; cherish with pride  
 Like my rag  
 It's like my soul is released  
 Except not deceased  
 Blind by realities' sight  
 Lost in dreams by night  
 Visions of you by my side  
 Cruising through lives  
 Ride together without shame  
 Until death calls my name  
 It's a trip how the script without warning flips  
 Performs a double take and finalizes that dip mente  
 playin' tricks Rewinding the clocks, every tick, every step  
 retraced  
 With every feeling embraced  
 Shackled from the start  
 Stored deep in my heart  
 Your back I guard as mine  
 Trucha for those mimes  
 I recognize what I see:  
 Real 'til death just like me  
 This mentality we share  
 A dying breed so rare  
 An ongoing tale  
 In my cell these thoughts prevail  
 'Til the day I get free  
 Hit the calles you and me.

**-Grumpy, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: You're way too smart for us to start our usual lecture/ But that only leads us to further conjecture/ What great lessons you might have taught — and yet still may/ If God had cast you in a different play/ If you had lived our lives and we had yours/ You'd be warning us as we moved through these institutional tours/ But that's not the case, and you're paying the price/ Doing things that even you judge to be not very nice/ You've risked freedom, safety and even love's touch/ Leaving you limping along on the street's crutch/ But our loudest lament is not for the crimes that you've done/ But that you've cheated us all out of your day in the sun*

### Missing You

What's up wit it Beat this yo boy lil' Kev. Man I was stressing since yesterday because I saw the 2007 homicide list and I saw my brother. I was getting mad and sad. My brother is number 40 on the list.

People know him as fat Joe or White Joe. If you from Oakland then ya might know who I'm talking 'bout. We been through hella shit.

I remember when I was seven or eight he would always bring me to the park and take me hella places. The day after he got killed I was hella mad. I couldn't believe it. I didn't want to believe it but it was true. I never been the same after.

I always watch my back now because you can't trust no one. R.I.P Joe. Gone but never forgotten. Hated by some but loved by many.

**-Lil' Kev, Alameda**

*From The Beat: That must have been very hard to see your brother's name on that list. We're glad you have some good memories of your time with him. What would he say to you now, if he could? He will always be part of you now, and though we know that is not the same as having him here, it is still true he is part of you.*

### What Do You Expect From Me

Hey so-called father.  
 You leave for two years,  
 And what do you expect from me?  
 To run in your arms?  
 You disrespected my mother  
 And what do you expect from me?  
 To be daddy's little girl?  
 You call me a name other than Khalilah  
 And what do you expect from me?  
 To forgive you right away?  
 You say you love me  
 And what do you expect from me?  
 To believe you after you done lied to me multiple times  
 You say you'll never hurt me again  
 And what do you expect from me?  
 To spend the night with you after you done done hurt so many times?  
 Not only physically but emotionally...  
 If you didn't know that you can hurt in all type of ways  
 What do you expect from me?

**-Miss Manditory, Alameda**

*From The Beat: Your voice is so strong here, powerful and clear. Have you considered sending your father this poem? We don't know enough about your relationship to know whether it's too late or not, and to know whether he's ready to listen to what his daughter has to say. But it might be worth finding out!*

### The Best Advice I Gave.

The best advice I ever gave out was to my friend since I was eight. He was unemployed and used to tell me he wasn't ever gonna be anything. I tell him he just has to put his heart into things. He taught me everything about graffiti art. I guess I love graffiti art so much I draw every day.

He would say he won't be as good as me, but I believe if he just practices and puts his heart into it, he could be better than me. I tell him he would be something in life and now he draws every day and puts his heart into it.

**-Dillon, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: It's obvious that you have a lot of heart to put into things. Telling your friend that he can achieve what he puts his heart into is advice that covers much more than just art; it covers all your hopes and dreams. You can achieve them if you put your heart into it. What a good friend you are!*

### Take My Advice

The best advice I think I gave, some say, would be me telling my roommate and a couple other homies not to get high, because one of the homies went on a pass then they came back and brought some weed into the facility. I told him and the homies not to even do that shhh because they were just going to get all caught up, but they kept saying, "Naw it's all good."

So I told them, "just watch who you tell," but they kept telling other people so someone told staff. They raided us, but they didn't find anything.

I kept trying to tell them to flush that shhh, but they didn't want to, they kept on then they raided us again and "boom" they got popped!

I think me telling them to take my advice would have been there best decision, they should have took it.

**-P, Land Of Enchantment, New Mexico**

*From The Beat: It's too bad they didn't take your advice, and now that they got caught they'll have to man up and suffer the consequences for their actions. On the other hand we would like to give you some super props for being a man and saying no. This is the perfect sign that you are ready to get out of detention and start living. Life is about choices and the one you made could be your turning point in life. Keep us posted.*

### Voice Of An Islander

The best advice I ever gave was to just be real keep it solid and express how you feel. Never doubt anything you think because I did and I'm behind a fence with chain link razor wire and cement bricks piled high, only two out of seven days I get to see the sky. Don't be like me do right not wrong, don't get ahead of yourself just go along. I'm speaking on how I feel and I love it. Advice I receive and I stand above it, I don't lie and I don't hate like some do. I express my feelings and keep it true. Damn advice can be sometimes hard when I'm going through something in my own backyard. I like advice and learn from it, but sometimes I don't understand and I want to throw a fit. This life of mine can be used as advice, but locked down I really need a vice. Culture, pride, freedom, that's advice for you please just know I stay solid too. Days and nights I think hard and long. Please remember my advice when I'm gone.

**-Sean, Solano**

**From The Beat:** We hear your advice, and think that your consistent writing keeps that "voice" of your thoughts available for you to hear. We can tell you are thinking a lot. Have faith in yourself to create the life you know is possible.

### Having Fun Without Drugs/Alcohol

Well, I don't even drink or do drugs. My sister and I be having fun all the time. For example the day we went to Disneyland for the first time. We had hella fun. I was about five years old and I still remember.

As soon as we got there, we went straight to rides. When I was a little girl I was big fan of Sleeping Beauty, so I went straight to get her signature. We stayed over there for five days in a hotel. We would go out from morning to night and have fun. After the trip was done, we was upset, but at the same time I was happy and glad we went.

**-Rosa, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We're so glad that you know how to have fun without polluting your system with chemicals. Have you been back to Disneyland since you were five? Besides Sleeping Beauty's Castle, what else do you like there? How are you going to keep yourself free (when you touch down) so you can enjoy a place like Disneyland and not just write about it?

### Heaven's Stubbyest Angel

What good Beat this Nuttso and I'm writin' bout my dad because he was stubby all the way around from his head to his toes. But yeah I know when he got to heaven his hair was freshly braided or in a perm like he like it, with a whole white Stacty Adims suit/ with the shoes and a gold cross/ with a pinky ring with the letter p.t printed in it by god as a gift to my dad. Feel I know my dad was lookin' stubby.

He probably was up there getting' all the lil' stubby angels female. Almost get kicked out of Heaven but him and god have a personal relationship that everybody don't know about and he end up stayin' in heaven.

But this been somethin' on my mind for a while so I want it put in The Beat and I want to say R.I.P daddy love you.

**-Lil' Nuttso, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is a cool tribute to your father, full of respect for and knowledge about the things he loved. Sounds like he's okay now, how are you doing?

### Problemas Pasados

Bueno, yo les voy a contar un poco de mi vida y de los problemas en las calles, las drogas, y en el alcohol.

Andar en las calles, no te deja nada bueno. Te meten en problemas con tus amigos, con tu familia.

Hubo una vez en el cual andaba con mi amigo en el carro, y tubimos un accidente y sali herido. Mi amigo se murió en el accidente. Lo siento y me duele adentro de mi corazón. Nunca olvidaré a mi homie de corazón. Siempre lo recuerdo a cada momento. Andaba en el alcohol.

Una vez no teníamos dinero y asaltamos a un paisa. Le quitamos el dinero y los golpiamos, y nos tomamos el dinero hasta el amanecer.

Andar en el alcohol, las drogas, y en las maras son malas. Le pido a Dios que me aparte de todo lo malo, que se apiade de mí, que me ayude a salir rapido de esta cárcel.

Dios es amor y con la ayuda de él, todo es positivo.

**From The Beat:** Estas son las cosas que siempre hay de esperarse cuando andas manejando bajo la ebriedad del alcohol. Tubistes suerte que no perdistes la vida tú también. Todo lo que has hecho por culpa del licor, te ha marcado la vida. Busca mejor solución para alejarte de esos. Antes que termines tu vida o termines preso para el resto de tu vida, busca ayuda. Hay programas como AA (Alcoholicos Anonimos). Puede que te ayuden mucho como han ayudado a todos.

### Past Problems

Well, I'm going to share something about my life and the problems that I've gone through due to the streets, drugs and alcohol.

Being on the streets, doesn't bring anything good. They get you into problems with your friends and family.

There was a time when I was with my brothers in a car, and had an accident and I was injured. My brother died in the accident. I'm sorry and it hurt from the bottom of my heart. I'll never forget my homie, who is in my heart. I'll always remember him. He was on alcohol.

One time we didn't have money and we robbed a guy. We took his money and bit him. We drank until the next morning with that money.

Being on alcohol, drugs or gangs are bad. I ask God to get me away from all the bad thing, to have mercy on me and to help me get out of jail.

God is love and with Him everything is positive.

**-Dixon, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** There are the things that always have to be expected when driving under the influence of alcohol. You were lucky you didn't lose your life as well. All you've done has been caused by alcohol and it has marked your life. You should find a solution to your problems. Before you end up your life or get jailed. We recommend you a program called AA (Alcoholic Anonymous). They can help you a lot like they've helped so many others.

### Real Life

I'm not the young man they judge me as

I'm the boy my moms hugs me as

I think of my mistakes and flood myself in pain

I need help I am like a lost dog stuck in rain

I see my life flash before my eyes

I live too rough life so it ain't no time to cry

I think like I'm gonna bounce back quick

I pray forgiveness and for my bad sins.

**-Young Marco, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Nice piece man. You touch on the complicated lives we all lead, how we're different with different people. Maybe the truth is that taken as a whole person, we're each a mixture, some of each of these. But it does seem easiest to live with yourself when these different parts of yourself all fit together more easily and you don't feel like you gotta hide. And luckily you are so young, it's not too late to make some changes so you can start living life without all the bad sins and learn from your mistakes.



### Free

Everybody's got to start their own fire  
 Everybody's got to run it on their own  
 Everybody's got to be something that they're not  
 Everybody's got to move it alone because  
 Living Soul  
 Freedom's a tragedy  
 But you can't be who you want to be  
 Living Soul  
 Freedom's a tragedy  
 But you can't see what you want to see  
 Wishing and hoping and thinking you're safe  
 You're the one who's got this under control  
 Never a minute will pass you by  
 and the Heavens invade your soul  
 It's not something you can hold  
 It's not something you are  
 It's not something you can buy or steal  
 But when you don't know who you are.  
 Living Soul  
 Freedom's a tragedy  
 But you can't be who you want to be  
 Living Soul  
 Freedom's a tragedy  
 But you can't see what you want to see.

**-Wylie Coyote, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is a very powerful and deep poem. We really like it. You're definitely right as we are in control of our own lives for the most part. Freedom's a tragedy when you lose it. You have some real powerful words. What inspired you to write this poem?

### My Mom's Touch

The last hug that I've  
 had was something very sad.  
 Now everyday I got to see my mom through  
 a glass so hard to let go  
 the past that embrace  
 her warm touch that  
 energy I still try to keep  
 in me think about it every  
 day pray to god that one day  
 just one day I can have  
 that last hug I once had.

**-Lil' Tone, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is really moving. We can feel how painful it is to be away from her and to want that touch. How that memory is one of the things that helps keep you going. Not being touched is one of the hardest things about being locked up.

### And Still I Rise

What it is with The Beat? You know me, the same ol' same ol'. I only got two more days, then I'm out of here, ya dig.

But check this out. My PO gave me some bad news. He said that he recommended that I stay here until Christmas because I got in some fights. He said my behavior was messed up. He said I need to change my attitude before I get out. But how can I change my attitude and my behavior around when I'm in here with a bunch of people who really don't care about me and when I get out — if I even get out. They don't give a rat's ass.

This place is like an emotional rollercoaster. Some people's moods are up, some are down. I have done a lot of good in here. I've completed my GED and had a successful play that I created through the Each One Reach One program. But I think I'm gettin' out. Matter of fact, I know I'm gettin' out.

I'm outta here like yesterday. I love you lil' bra.

**-Young Mari, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** You (and we) know that short time can be the hardest time to do because you have to be on your Ps and Qs all the time. We're sorry you found it necessary to put yourself a little further into the hole, and hope that it doesn't change your exit date or placement. We are very proud of what you've accomplished, and we hope you keep writing in The Beat even after you get out and start moving forward with your life.

### The Best Advice I Ever Gave

The best advice I will give is going to be to my younger brother, which is to be all you can be and accomplish all of your goals and if you can do that, then you can be whatever you want such as a lawyer, a professional sports star, an actor, or a CEO of a huge company. And to go with that advice would be never get yourself into trouble because then you will end up like me, a juvenile who is in the hall and is trying to get his head on straight.

So take my advice lil' bro and keep accomplishing your goals and you'll succeed in life. I know taking my advice will let you succeed in life and you will thank me for this advice.

The best advice I gave myself was to be grateful for what I have and to start changing my life around to be a good person on the inside and out. Now I am changing my life and when I finish my time in the hall, I'm going home and teaching my younger siblings to go the straight and narrow and to not end up like I did, but end up successful. Much love lil' bro.

**-Brandon, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** That's some great advice you've written down, but it sounds like you think it's too late to follow it yourself. It's not too late Brandon, you're still young enough to turn it around — just follow your own advice.



### Fake Friends And Real Friends

There's a difference between fake friends and real friends. Real friends stick with you 'til the end. Fake friends will get you into shhh, again and again! Fake friends will get you into shhh. Real friends will get you out of it! Real friends will give you good advices, Fake friends will lead you to bad surprises! Real friends tell you not to do it: "It's all good... see!" Fake friends tell you to do it or "You're a wussy.." Fake friends don't know how to say it. Real friends will explain it. I'm just gon' finish this 'cause it's time to go. Remember that your real friends are in front of you... you just don't know.

**-Chuy Jr., San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** (The first thing we have to say is check out the spelling of the word, "friend.") Okay, now that we have that out of the way, we can tell you how much we admire this piece! Have you let fake friends lead you into harm's way? How can you know when your friends are "real" and when they're "fake"? Can the same person be a "real" friend sometimes, but a "fake" friend at other times?

## Today When I Woke Up...

Today I woke up feeling damn well stressed. I went to court this Tuesday. I didn't get too much good news though. This is my first time and they want to give me the book. Man the system ain't playing, they are giving away time like baseball numbers. I know that this is my last time trying to commit a crime though.

That is why this piece actually falls under something I will never do again. It is causing and effecting my life. I know it ain't nothing out there but drama, and bull shhh that is going on. But dang I miss my family. I'm about to be 18 in a month and I know I ain't going to be out.

The system ain't no joke, they are making examples of us teenagers, especially the gang bangers, and people who think this thing is a joke so they keep coming through this revolving door. Not learning the lessons they should be. I know, unlike them though, that this is my first and last time committing a crime, even if I'm an expert in the field.

**-Precious, Fresno**

**From The Beat:** Thank you for sharing Precious. Your messages to us are always showing us how much you are growing inside these walls. What is more sad then how fast the system gives away time, is how fast young people make choices that get them into the court system in the first place. Young people are very influential on their friends and it takes someone like you to tell them that that ain't the way to go if you want to help them out while you are here.

## Having Fun Without Drugs/Alcohol

Having fun without drugs/alcohol isn't hard to do as long as you do things productively. As in, stay in school, have something better to do after school than to go and hang out with friends and get drunk or get high.

Get in to extra curricular activities or get a job. Try to stay with family and go places and get involved with them as much as you can.

Jail time ain't that much fun, it's not too fun, it's not a place you'd wanna be.

**-Productive, Solano**

**From The Beat:** What do you do after school that keeps you productive? All of your advice is good. We hope you follow it yourself and stay free.

## My Life

My sky is black  
My day is red  
I walk on a blue ground  
My heart is full of red  
I spit dirt always  
Wear a frown  
My mind is gone; my brain is dead  
Can't get the past out of my head  
I do what I do  
I am what I am  
I play with steel  
I eat cold meals  
Wear the same clothes  
Every day stay in a room and to God I pray  
My food is brown dirt murky  
Sittin' in here every day hungry and thirsty  
Damn!!  
I can't wait to go; I know I can't escape  
I feel like an ape the color of snakes  
I really can't wait  
To get out of this place.

**-Lil' Hyphy, Fresno**

**From The Beat:** When you get out, what will you do differently? How will you make it better?

## Big D

The one book that I liked was this book from the last time I was here called "Big D." I liked it because I can relate to it. He tells about his life and all the stuff he had to do to survive. People mainly see kids just doing bad things because they choose to do them, and because they want to fit in. Big D did what he had to do and that's why I can relate to this book.

You see, I do things I don't want to do everyday, but I do it because I have to in order to never come down.

Most of these kids have nice homes and good parents, so they have no reason to be here, they do things by choice. I don't live everyday liking my life. No matter where I go or what I do I am always in the worst situation, and I still never let it show. That is just how you get to be when you live this life style.

There were a lot of stories of Big D's life but the one I like the most was the story of his wife committing suicide. She had thought that Big D overdosed and she killed herself, but he hadn't overdose because he came back.

I have seen a couple of people almost die but they come back too. It's crazy but at the time I thought it was funny. But I was a stupid little kid but I have grown up and grown out of it.

**-Juanita, Fresno**

**From The Beat:** We are glad that you have been able to read while in the JJC, and to be able to hear the stories of others that you can relate to so that you don't feel alone. We hope too, that you are able to stop focusing on others and comparing how bad you have it to others, because no matter how bad you think you have it, someone somewhere has it worse than you do. Keep reading and growing both in here and on the outs.

## Spending My Time

Some people have a hard time having fun without drugs. I use to think that way but I managed to deal with my problem.

Now I'm kicking it with my friends playing games and chilling without having to smoke bud. I'm really glad that I'm doing better things for better reasons. And that's me having fun without some drugs. That's my Beat!

**-Smeagle, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We're glad you were able to overcome that stumbling block. What did you do to overcome that and what advice do you have, based on your experience, for those around you that might be helpful in their recovery?

## Why Do You Care?

Why do you care if she loves you or not? Why do you care if you're six feet under in a black box? Why do you care if your family die? Why do you care if you see your momma cry?

Why do you care if you get stabbed by a knife? Why do you care about your girl? Why do you care about pleasing the world? Why do you care about what people think? Why do you care about what alcohol you drink?

Why do you care about anybody but yourself? Why do you care about being in jail? Why do you worry about going to hell? Why do you care about the Beat Within? Why do you care about the hood you live in?

Why do you care about the police? Why do you care about being free? Why do you care about seeing a white dove?

You care because these are some of the things you love.

**-Javon, Solano**

**From The Beat:** Yes, and we need to take care of the things we love.



## Turning Point

I woke up confident but with self control.  
The me, from yesterday just seems so old.  
I'm at the point where I could speak up for myself.  
I think I could do it without no help.  
I don't want to lose this spark, this light, this flame.  
It's just thinking about the me from yesterday, it seems so lame.  
Why did I let all those people get away with so much.  
Abuse, yelling, hitting and such  
I'm sick of people bringing me down  
I'm done with people pushing me around.

**-Lady Chief, Solano**

**From The Beat:** Feed the spark, the light and fire in yourself—the part of you that is confident, and forgive the past. Let it go, but don't forget. Keep feeding that flame inside so the fire stays warm!

## Life

It's not often young ninjas get a chance to enjoy riches and legitimate fashion. So many of us say "eff it," get a bucket. It's all about survival with jealous rival so it makes it hard for us to do this.

When we were young the only weapon was our two fists. Now who miss the first lesson of life? But that's the game, home boy. And every move you make is a gamble.

Squares don't understand so it takes a ninja like me to explain. I show hatred because there is so much pain. I ain't your sissy or punk, so don't trip when you see me crying.

**-Yoks, Fresno**

**From The Beat:** Instead of a gamble, "every move you make" can be a purposeful step in a positive direction...if you want it to be that way. Don't let life be a crap shoot. It's up to you.

## Without Using

I been using for a long time. Every time I go out "having fun" it always resorts to using some type of drug or alcohol.

The last time I had fun without using was playing football for a team. I never really thought about how much fun I had when I wasn't using. Every time I would use I would supposedly have fun. Every time I played football it left happy memories.

When I would use I would just forget about it. If I could take back using I would because I would replace that wasted time with memories that are happy to me.

**-Tyler aka Puppy Chow, Solano**

**From The Beat:** Now you've had the chance to think about what life you actually prefer, what when you think about it you really enjoy. You can't take things back, but you can learn from them to decide your future.

## New Foundations

It's amazing to me how us youngsters can listen to our O.G.'s and we can't even listen to our parents. I don't know what it is. But we all seem to do it.

If our O.G.'s tells us to do something then we'll do it at the drop of a dime. But if our parents tell us to do something we take our time and stuff. Can somebody please tell me why.

**-The Curb, Solano**

**From The Beat:** When you are a teen you're supposed to be becoming more independent from your family, getting ready to head off on your own and build your own family eventually. It makes sense that teens find others to listen to...as they break away from their family, it doesn't mean they don't love them, but you do have to be careful who you listen to, and think whether they have your best interest at heart—like your family does.

## Mis Pensamientos De Todos Los Temas

A veces trato de aconsejar a mis amigos más cercanos, mas que todo a mi hermano menor. Le consejo sobre el uso de las droga, alcohol y sus consecuencias que traen. Mi hermano me da las gracias por mis consejos, pero se enoja mucho porque yo ya he hecho drogas y he tomado alcohol. El sabe que lo aconsejo porque no soporto el peso de mi conciencia y se necesitan fuerza de voluntad para salir.

Recuerdo haberle dado unos dólares a una señora para comer. Se veía que lo necesitaba. Me senti muy bien porque tengo a mi abuela de la misma edad. No me sorprendi porque siempre me ha gustado ayudar a las personas mayormente de la tercera edad.

Cuando me la pase bien sin nada en mí fue cuando celebramos mi cumpleaños junto a mis padres, hermanos y abuelos. Tenía 11 año y es uno de mis recuerdos que más guardo en el corazón. Me gustaría aprender Inglés para trabajar y estudiar arte.

**From The Beat:** Estas en lo cierto. Se necesita tener mucho voluntad para poder salirse de las drogas. ¿Sigues en esos pasos? Recuerda que si no quieres que tu hermano siga el mismo camino que llebas, deberias de tomar un camino positivo para que el también lo siga. Siempre los hermanos menores siguen el paso de los hermanos mayores. Hicistes bien haber ayudado a esa persona. Algún día alguien te ayudara de la misma forma. Lo versa!

## My Thoughts About All The Topics

Sometimes I try to give advice to my near friends, especially my younger brother. I advise him about the usage of drugs, alcohol and the consequences they bring.

My brother thanks me for the advice I give him, because I've drank alcohol and used drugs. He knows I advise him because I can't handle the load on my conscience and it needs a lot of strength of willpower to overcome it.

I remember giving a few dollars to a lady so she can eat. She looked like she was in need. I felt good because I have a grandmother that age. I didn't get surprised because I've always liked to help people especially older people

When I had a good time without anything was when I had my birthday with my parents, brothers and grandparents. I was 11 years old and it was one of the memories I keep in my heart. I would like to learn English to work and to study art.

**-Julio, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** You're right. You need willpower from oneself to get out gangs. Are you still in those negative paths? You should know that if you don't want your brother to follow in your steps you are walking in, you should consider taking a positive road, so he can take it. Young brothers always follow the road of their older brothers. You did the right thing by helping that lady. Someday, when you get older, there will be someone who will help you the same way. You'll see!

## A Fun Time

One time I was having fun without drugs or alcohol was when my family and I went to Monterey. I was thirteen years old. It was a very fun day because I was with my family enjoying our time.

The last time I "played" without chemical assistance was when I was on my furlough and I was chillin' with my brother.

I have a couple of things I like to do without drugs or alcohol. Some things like snowboarding, drivng, or talkin' to females. So there are ways you can have fun without drugs or alcohol.

**-Jixxx, Solano**

**From The Beat:** You list a lot of good examples. You get used to not using and drinking when you've done it for awhile and find more and more things to do...and you don't get locked up for dumb decisions!

## My Thoughts Of Confusion

My mind wanders off. First, I would start thinkin' about my lady, then I would start thinkin' about this other girl during the summer before I got locked up I started going out with this girl. I'ma keep her anonymous. We went to the movies as usual. She even came to my birthday party even when my girl was there. My lady did get mad, but I wasn't trippin' 'cause she did screw me over. To tell you the truth, she deserved it.

But truthfully, I am a kind person. I give and help. I don't take shhh from no one. Anyways, she got my mind blown. I don't need to be drunk, high or on pills to have fun with her. She ran through my mind 24/7. But now that I'm locked up, my lady runs back to me and comes to supports me. I do love her because she showed me the other side of life I never experienced. Last week she told me her mom cried because of me. As for now I don't have a lot of info about it. And about the other girl, she still runs through my mind.

**-Saetern, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We appreciate the honesty of this piece. It's hard to balance two loves at the same time, even if the balance is only in your mind. When you say your girl showed you the other side of life that you never experienced, can you give us some examples of what you mean? The real tragedy, of course, is that you have allowed yourself to be put into an all-male environment where all you can do is think about what you've left behind. This is one of the most cruel features of jail, and we're sorry you have to experience it.

## Best Advice/Worse Advice

The best advice I have ever got in my life was from my Grandpa. He told me that I should always have respect for others even if they don't show me respect.

And he also told me to be a man of my word. Also, not to pray only for myself, my friends and family but also for my enemies.

The worst advice I have ever gotten was from one of my supposed homeboys. He told me to take out one of my cousins. So I smashed on him cause family will stick together no matter what. Stay up, late.

**-White Boy, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Your Grandpa was wise. Have you figured out why he told you to respect people even when they don't respect you and to pray for your enemies? The second part about bad advice doesn't sound right. Taking into consideration what your Grandpa said, how could you just smash on some guy like that? Yeah, that was bad advice, man!

## My People Deserve The Best

Well what's up Beat and all you that are locked up as well. I hope everybody is in the best of health and spirits. Today, I'm going to talk about our Latino youth these days.

It hurts to see my people struggle. And when I say my people I'm talking about Latinos. I swear I look around and everyone is Latino. I'm just like damn! That sucks. It doesn't matter if you're Mexican, Puerto Rican, to Honduran. You're Latino and you're locked up! I think my people deserve the best in life.

We kill each other for nothing and the new generation could give a shhh. It's sad but it's reality. But what can I do I'm just a kid. Well Beat I'm done until next time.

To everybody locked up, stay strong and better yourself please, bye.

**-Chino Boy, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Good advice! We also think your people deserve the best as well as other types of race. At the end, we are all the same. If you care about your people, what can you do to make a change? Maybe you can set the example they need to realize that this world needs a change for the good and the better of all. Good job!

## Being Under The Influence Is Not As Cool As It Seems

I remember one sunny day  
 Headed to my uncle's pad  
 And all he said was lets drive around the Bay  
 I said okay, for sure, lets go  
 But next thing you know before we get in the car  
 A couple of fools run up fresh out the bar  
 They started running they're mouths  
 And little did we know that they were drunk  
 I saw that they wanted to start some funk  
 And just with the blink of an eye my uncle got stuck  
 As those fools ran I dropped to my knees  
 And just kept on saying, "Oh God Please,"  
 The ambulance came and all that was going through my head was Is he gonna be the same?!

My eyes filled with tears  
 That day, my whole life just switched gears  
 A couple of months passed by  
 And, come to find out, he didn't die  
 I was all happy and elated  
 Now I think this is better and just wish I could never be that faded.

**-Alejandro, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Again, nice poem man. Is that a true story? We're sorry that you had to experience that, but why do you think those guys were starting mess with your uncle? Do you think it was the alcohol? You've all been given another chance, take it!

## The Best Advice I Ever Gave

What's up in jail when I hear people trippin' off some little time they got. Then I say look at me bra and how long I got so they realize it ain't that bad that they have a year or six months. Then they think about what I just said then they be like it ain't that bad 'cause they know I ain't getting out no time soon. So that's the best advice I ever gave to somebody.

That's what a close friend told me--that it's some people ain't getting out, so I see it like that. So that's how I tell people, using me for a example. I aint really trip 'cause I'm a player and I did what I did so I'll do the time. But don't really think about it that's all.

**-Baby Quail, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** What do you do to use the time you have well? What do you think about? How do you try to make your time work for you, for your life?

## Advice

I write from jail just to let cha know  
 How life for many goes  
 I hope you take notes  
 To try to stay away from these halls

Today the wind blows  
 And the day dies to never come back  
 And all I got is my hopes  
 Till the day we get together los dos

In the outs and bring the call to all of those  
 And prevent others from going away from their folks  
 And end up talking to these walls  
 in these halls, where many people lose their hopes

**-Lavelle, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** It seems like the best advice to give (others and yourself) is: Don't lose hope! No one knows what's coming in their lives, so there is always a reason to hope. We hope you know that.



## Trust

Trust is when you believe in someone  
To be the person I am and have become  
The last person I trusted let me down  
Never calls, never writes, never comes around  
I like to trust my instincts about what I believe  
Playing sports going to college is what I want to achieve  
Even though I have made bad choices in life  
I want to thank a loved one named Jesus Christ  
Because we hasn't gave up on me  
A little help and love from my family is what I receive  
But having a little trust in your lifetime ain't bad at all  
Being in jail I can't regret at all.

**-Mike-Mike, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We don't know who the "last person" you trusted was who let you down, but we wonder if you trust yourself, since it appears that you've let yourself down. What has happened since you got here that makes you not regret it? How will being here change your actions when you leave?

## The Best Advice

What's up Beat? Today I'm writing about the best advice I ever gave or got. I think the best advice I've ever received was from my parents. The advice they gave me was to think about the decisions I make in life. I think that was the best advice because every decision I make is going to take me somewhere.

Now, I know why I'm in here, and it's not because I made a bad decision. It's because I didn't think about the decision. Now I want to give some advice to everyone. The advice I want to give is the same one my parents gave me, so think about the decisions you make in life, and also think about how are they going to benefit you or screw your life.

**-Sergo, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** This is excellent advice, but you've made us curious to know what you mean when you say you're here because you didn't think about your decision, but not because you made a bad decision. How does that work?

## Last Fun I've Had

The last time I ever really had fun was when me and my girl were bored, cashed in my check, put I some gas, and dipped, went on the freeway, and drove and drove and ended up in Santa Cruz. We went to the boardwalk, walked around like a couple of love birds, and walked on the beach 'til sunset. It was priceless, just with the woman of my life. We both had so much fun on the way back, just putting the sunroof down, coming back hella late, watching the moon with hella traffic. It was the greatest moment ever.

The best moment ever when me and my girl would drive to her house, park, then walk around the whole day just spending time walking, going anywhere we wanted, just together. Damn, thinking back! Damn, I took that for granted. Damn! I had so much fun. Time going by so quick... days, months, now in here feels forever. What to do to go back to those days? Damn, this time I'm out there, I'm gonna just forget about everything that distracts me, and walk the aisle and never look back... and live happy with my lady. Forget the life I lived! I'ma change for the better for me and my baby girl.

**-Fernando, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Sometimes, we can't see the treasure we already have until we lose it! You have learned a valuable lesson about what's important in your life, and what's not worth doing any more. Don't forget the promises you make in this piece because promises are easier to make when you're locked up than to keep when you are free. It's in your hands. You deserve that happy life with your lady, and many more great moments doing nothing but being together!

## Fun In The Sun, Or Is It.

What's up Beat? This ya boy. Well I'm from Vacaville. Well me and my homies play football every Sunday. We be sober, playing football, having fun. It's all good, me and the homies all have fun. But after we are done we blaze, because we be sore and tired.

But a lot of times the police will come and harass me and my homies. They'll start asking questions like, "Why are all you guys meeting up here?" When they know we're just playing football. One time when they tried to get us to stop playing, we didn't, so they attacked one of my homies. And they started hitting him, it was all bad after that.

**-Sir General, Solano**

**From The Beat:** The football sounds good. It would be great if no one worried when a group of young men get together. Why are the police concerned? Do you think they have been given any reason to doubt your motives, or fear you as a group? We don't condone harassment in any way, but it will help you to be able to see from their perspective as well.

## What Happened

What's up Beat. Well I was almost done with my program, I did almost five months, and then I went on a furlough and got drunk and never came back.

So now I'm back and I gotta start my program over, but I only have to do two and a half months. So I'm a be out in December. Well that's about it Beat, I'ma write again next week.

So if you are doing a program, just run your program and don't mess up! So when I get out I'm a try and do good and stay out of trouble.

**-Josh, Solano**

**From The Beat:** What are you going to do next time when it seems like a good idea to get drunk—or just have a beer (which may lead to getting drunk)? We like your advice, and hope you take it too.

## Going Legit

What's up with the Beat? Well my time here is running out. I'm about to leave this place. I been here for too long, about a year now and its about time to finish the rest of my sentence in the YA.

While I been here a ninja been thinking and when I get out I'm going legit. That's all I got for the Beat this week.

**-Lano, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Hey Lano that's great news that you've decided you value your life and have decided to go legit when you get out. What work are you thinking of going into? Work on your skills, and Good Luck!

## When I Get Out

When I get out I'm going to work and make a lot of money the right way. I'm gonna try my hardest to try not to come back again. I got 109 days left and can't wait until I get out.

I'm going to do good, kick it with my girl and my family. I'm finna get back in sports again because when I did I never came in here but when I stopped I came in here a lot.

I'm going to try to change and become a better person and do good and stay out of trouble. I'm going to be back on my mission bank collecting.

**-Bay Star, Solano**

**From The Beat:** Good plans. What sports do you play? Where are you going to look for a job? It's good to know what helps you keep stepping with your good foot forward.

## Praying

The best advice I gave some one is to pray. Praying brings peace of mind, and understanding. Prayer solves problems and gets you out of situations you can't get yourself out of.

Praying and crying to the one above sending a message on the wing of a dove, asking for forgiveness, love and wisdom. This is the best advice I gave to someone, and that someone is me.

**-Lil Tone, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** We're glad you know how to bring yourself peace of mind and guidance. Maybe you can write about what you learn, so you never forget. It's important to take the advice you'd give to someone else.

## Midnight Passion

Someone once told me when the sun rises it's setting somewhere else, bringing forth joyous ecstasy and the nights thriving wealth, Brutal skies present adventure, as the lust within me attacks; Now I'm searching for pleasure throughout the night, when beauty escapes the shadows temptation wins and patience folds engaged in awestruck battle, the number is 12, the hands are touching for it seems to be everlasting, satisfied breaths, calm the soul, I've found my midnight passion.

**-Ph. Fresh, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** This is a very intriguing piece, deep and subtle, filling us with questions about the reality that lies behind the words. Is your "midnight passion" a person? A drug? A forbidden or secret lust?

## On The Way To Success

Aye, bay bay. What's good with it, Beat? Once again it's your boy Mouthpiece B. Just keeping my head up, handling my business, just waiting for the day I step out and get to smell fresh air again. But for now, I'm stuck in what I call my thinking house (my cell). All I really do in there is think. Think about my goals I set. I plan on staying out of trouble and just being successful. But actions speak louder than words. So I got to go back up on what I say.

One thing I need to learn how to do is how to walk away from trouble and walk down the right path. I made wrong choices before, knowing it's wrong, but still doing it. I guess it was the influence in my life. Hanging around with the wrong crowd. I need to think through my actions and choices before I make them.

Also I have been staying away from smoking and drinking for 2½ months and I feel great. By the time I'm out, I'll be healthy and drug free for 5½ months. Hopefully I will stay that way.

I need to stop kicking it on the block and start being with the family more. I got a family that's out there waiting for me to come home and they got a son that is determined to do good and be successful. So everything is gonna be good. You can do anything if you put your mind in focus for it. I bet if I put as much effort as I've been putting for the block, and put effort into being successful and staying out of trouble, it will all be good. Well Beat, I really ain't got much to say. Take care and be safe. Until pencil meets paper, peace.

**-Mouthpiece B, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** You've got a lot of wise words in here, but perhaps none so wise as "actions speak louder than words." You've got to back up what you say by following through with your plans to stay on the straight path. You've already identified some of the usual suspects that have kept you down in the past: drugs, alcohol, hanging with the wrong crowd. Keep that in mind when you get out, because temptation will always be there, but now that you've dealt with the consequences, we hope you'll be wise in the future and prevent yourself from repeating past mistakes.

## You Never Know What You Have Until You Lose It...

What's up, Beat? Me, just chillin', found out some very bad news! I had a visit from my PO yesterday and my mom today. They both told me some very disturbing and upsetting news about my twin brother and primo. They were involved in something very stupid that can cost them their lives!

My primo is in this juvie too. But my brother is in County next door. And I hope nothing goes through, I mean the charges and stuff. I feel really bad because I'm getting out next week and he's already locked up.

But like two weeks ago, I wrote a letter to him, and I was basically telling him to leave my stuff alone, and stop wearing and using my phone and hella other stuff. I wish I never did that because I feel kind of guilty in a way. I know it's not my fault, but I'm thinking now that maybe his actions were involved by what I said if you know what I mean. And because he was out, and I knew I was gonna see him when I got out, it gets me hella depressed and tears come to my eyes because I'm not gonna be able to talk to him, only through a glass and a phone. It sucks because you don't realize what you have until you lose it. I'm not saying I lost my brother, but I'm saying he's gone for the time being!! And it sucks cause he's my twin brother! I already miss him.

So everybody who reads this, remember: treasure what you have because you can lose someone in a matter of seconds or minutes and I'm telling you, it's not a good feeling. But I'm out of this facility this Tuesday, so this is my last Beat, so keep it tight. Beat, late.

**-Buzzy, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry you've had such bad news come to you on the verge of getting released. It's only too true what you say about treasuring what you have, since you never know when it will disappear. Our guess is that your mom is really going to be relying on you now, so we hope you stay out of trouble for her sake, and for your own.

## Best Advice

The best advice I had was when my cuddie Mobchylld was telling me to just do me and forget about all these other cuts that don't want nothing good for you and they don't ever wanna see nobody else shine. My cuddie get out tomorrow so I'm a take what he's been telling me and run with it.

**-D, Solano**

**From The Beat:** Sometimes really good friends can tell each other the truth even when it's not what the other person wants to hear. Hopefully he listens to you too! Take care of yourself.

## Rain Drop

A tear drops from my eye to the floor like a rain drop it falls like I fall in the hands of trouble and easy as 123 or ABC and people just won't see that rain drops fall to the streets like bodies drop on the streets.

It's not happy to see bodies laying down on the streets so I hope people can just stop and see what the streets really mean, and to watch the rain drops fall to the streets just like your mom's tears drop on their sleeves.

**-Young BB, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is a melancholy poem with all the water flowing. Is you falling into trouble as sad as the rain, or people dying and your mom crying?



## Firme Tiempos

Que ondas, Beat? Pues simon, it's the one and only Grumpy keepin' it firme con my head high like always, just here kickin' back, 'bout to drop some lines on the third topic.

La ultima vez (the last time) I had some good days without the involvement of drugs and alcohol is when I was con mi vato. When I'm with him, it doesn't matter what we're doing or where we're at. Regardless, I'ma have a smile on my face 'cause just being by his side holding it down is enough for me. And the reason for that is because I mean it when I say I love him con todo mi corazon (with my whole heart).

In my opinion, when you truly love someone, then just having the company of that person should be enough. Don't get me wrong, I love my alcohol. Pero my good times don't revolve around it and I don't depend on it to keep my days interesting. Pues, with that said, I'ma cut this short. Orale pues, Beat, this jaina is out. Alrato!

**-Grumpy, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: It's refreshing to read something by you that isn't about glorifying your gang. It's also refreshing to read a piece that recognizes the joy we can get from doing things with those we love without having to phony up our emotional reactions with chemical stimulants, including alcohol. Good for you!*

## Fixing The Past

Life is hard growing up around criminals and violence. I was influenced by a known gang member, so I grew up doing things I wasn't supposed to. When some things happened in the neighborhood and the victim pointed me out because of the clothes I had on, the cops took me to juvenile hall.

I told my family I didn't do the crime, but they didn't believe me because I did this crime before. It was frustrating to know they didn't believe me because that made me feel the judge wouldn't believe me. So to top it off, my past made me look bad in the future. If I start fixing the present right now while I have enough time to read, think, plan and write, my future could look better.

**-Lo-Diggah, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: We wonder which feels worse for you — being locked up here, or not having your family believe you. You've lost their trust based on your own actions. But as you so rightly point out, you can regain their trust and reshape your future if you start doing the right things now. You were too young to control your past, but you are old enough now to control your future.*

## Skips Broadcast: Freestyle, Session 1

Beat, what it is? The Skip dude here again wit a little rhyme:

I come off the dome like you pick or comb  
I'm supposed to be at home but the streets I roam  
I like fast money, call me turbo cash  
My mind trippin' 'cause ma blunt laced with hash  
Now they say drugs is bad but tell me what is good  
The cops wnana take guns might as well take the 'hood  
'Cause that's all we see, like reality town  
I'm high all the time, somebody take me down  
I wanna change like a addict in rehab  
I'm always givin' opinions like I'm part of The Beat staff...  
ha ha

**-Dr. Skippa, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: You know what's bad, but you asked us "what's good"? So let us pound in some thoughts, like nails in wood/ Education's good 'cause it gives you a chance/ For your life and dreams and hopes to enhance/ Freedom's good 'cause it's in our nature to be free/ (You can enjoy females, like the birds and the bees)/ Sobriety's good 'cause when chemicals cloud your mind/ There's no end of trouble you can blindly find/ Skip's Broadcasts are good 'cause they reveal the real you/ A man-child who gives us plenty of thoughts on which to chew*

## I Cry

I couldn't think  
I had to let it sink  
So I went to see a shrink

All I did is cry  
I watched her die  
I hated that guy

He pulled the gun  
I saw him run  
Now she can't see the sun

I felt like I died  
I couldn't see the light  
Then all of a sudden everything went bright

She was in my hands  
Blood covered me  
I couldn't think

I knew I was crying  
I knew she was dying  
I wished I was lying

It was my fault  
She came looking for me  
Now she'll never again be able to see

She said she loved me  
Then she died  
And I screamed

All I could do was yell  
I felt like I was in hell  
Then I curled up like I was in a shell

I held onto her  
People pulled me away  
I yelled hey

I still feel pain  
It's everything for me to keep sane  
But I manage

I don't know what to say  
It's like God wanted me to pay  
But I still think of her today.

**-Stacks, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: This is painful stuff you're writing about. We hope it helps to get some of your feelings out on paper. Can you say goodbye to her in a letter, or poem or prayer, and let her say whatever she'd say to you, if she could as well?*

## Don't Get Caught Up

I don't like to be in YGC. I want to be with my family. I got to go to a group home. Someone did bad, and I got in trouble for it. I was there. I got wrapped up with people and got everything put on me. I did not do nothing.

What I'm trying to say is don't be with the wrong people at the wrong time because you will get wrapped up to. I want people to know, don't be a follower, be a leader. In the end it will help you out. It is not good to be a bad person in the world. It will catch up with you. Karma is what goes around comes around.

**-Young C, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: This is excellent advice. So tell us, where do you plan to lead yourself when you walk out of here? What new direction do you plan to follow so that it doesn't lead you back here?*

## I Don't Follow My Advice

I've never gave the best advice in the world, but I do remember telling my friend Niecy, "Obey your mom and always respect what your mom says to you." That advice is what I should have gave myself because now I'm in YGC for not respecting my mom and not obeying what she say.

Also when my friend had a problem with a boy, I just told her to take it slow and tell him how you feel. He ended up coming up to her and asking her out instead.

Or when me and my friends was trying to find some weed, I just told them without backing down maybe we should stop doing drugs because it might end up to something bigger than that and we be looking for some crack. That wasn't the best advice, because if it was, we probably would not be doing drugs in the first place.

But I've never really learned to take anybody advice, let alone my on advice. I should have been saying do good in school and listen, and follow directions. But if I took my own advice I wouldn't be here. Instead I don't learn from my mistakes and always mess up and don't want to come home on time. That's just me. Or tell my friends don't ditch school it's bad to cut.

**-No Name, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Can we give you some advice? Next time, start with your name so you won't forget to put it down when you're finished writing! We wish we knew who we were responding to, but since you didn't sign, we can't know. You have seen the consequences of not following your own excellent advice, which we think is a reflection of your age and maturity, and not a permanent condition like "I don't learn from my mistakes." As you grow into a responsible young adult, you will listen to yourself more carefully and make the choices you need to make to avoid becoming a slave of this system in the future.

## What I Want To Do

I want to knock a ninja down  
But then I don't  
I want to be free  
But then I don't  
I want to rob a bank  
But then I don't  
I'm 'bout to knock a ninja down  
No I'm not  
I'm 'bout to rob a bank right now  
No I'm not  
I don't know what I'm 'bout to do  
Yea I do, I'm 'bout to be free  
Yea I'm a do me  
Hell naw

**-Lil' Cookie, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** We feel like you just gave us a little snapshot of the inside of your mind, with all conflicting emotions you feel. It seems like there's a lot of different ways of "doing you"... some could hurt you, some could help you. Which approach is the one that you think you will choose?

## Sorry

I gave my love to you. You always gave it back.  
More is what you want from me, more is what I lack.  
I broke your heart for selfishness, without a care in the world.  
And you're still standing up today claiming me as your girl.  
I think of all the damage I tried to do to you.  
But you pretended like it never happened and we started over new.  
I hope you accept my apology for all the mistakes I've made and give me one more second, one more minute. One more day.

**-Kayla, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is a heartfelt apology. We hope your love gets to read this poem and hear your words.

## Stay Away

Stay away from crime  
If you can't do the time  
Stay away from the Block  
Stay away from drugs  
if it's the block you don't wanna hug.  
But I ain't gone knock you if you wanna hustle  
but think about your famm bamm's  
pain, sorrow, and struggle.  
So do yo best to stay out of jail  
And repent for your sins if you  
don't wanna go to hell  
Beat, stay up.

**-Boy L, Solano**

**From The Beat:** Take your own good advice and have a good life!



## The Best Advice I Ever Gave

Q-vole Beaters? Well this be that one an only Wyna coming but of San Jose. Pues, today I'm going to write about the best advice I ever gave.

When I do give advice some of it's positive stuff, an some of it's negative stuff, but most of the stuff is positive because I try and guide the littler homies in a good direction, cause most of them be on the wrong track.

Some of the homies take in the advice that I tell them. For example, like I tell them stay in school, and get a legal job, and don't get caught up with the cops cause that will be all bad. Pero most of them be hard-headed and still keep on doing what they do, so I guess they'll have to learn the hard way, que no? But I believe with all bad comes good. Pues, that's all for today, Beat readers. Late...

**-Wyna, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** It's great to give advice to those younger than yourself to keep on the right track, but how much do you follow this advice yourself? Giving advice can be very powerful if you use your own mistakes as examples of what not to do. On the other hand, saying one thing and then doing the opposite doesn't make a good leader.



## Mama's Lil' Boy

What's up Beat, this is your boy Twin, and I want to talk about my mom this week and how much I put her through. Broken laughter, tears dropping because me, And my twin brother are never there, Smiles turn to frowns. My days are always incomplete seconds pass But they feel like days Months pass but they feel like years Only seventeen and still coming here But soon I will be free. I can't stand this shhh anymore these concrete walls I sit in my room thinking about you mom and everybody else too. I sit and feel like I'm just a promise breaker. Then I see the beautiful smile on your face and the way you hug me so tight. You give me hope and give me faith. Your words are what keep encouraging me to do the right thing I want to pour out my heart Just to say that I love you with all my heart And to say that I am sorry I promise mom I will finish my program and come home and make you proud of me Only one more week till I leave to start my program and make my mom proud. Don't shed more tears for me or you I'll be home soon till then I'll stay strong and only for you... I love you mom see you soon.

**-Lil' Twin, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** We hope you make sure your mom sees a copy of this, published. Because this poem will make her proud. We know you've struggled, waiting for probation to send you to your placement, but remember your mother's words, "encouraging you to do the right thing" and let them give you strength. In the meantime, The Beat will always be here.

## Thinkin'

Wassup Beat? It's ya boy Team checking in seeing what's good! A ninja waitin on camp to come! It's been 1 month going on 2 months waiting in this hell whole. I'm tired of this!!!

I'm tired of switchin' units, having to get used to every staff and unit I go to, I been in unit 5 at first, then Max 2, Max 4, and now Unit 9! This my first time bein down and this shhh is stressful!!! I jus wanna do my 6 months at camp and get on wit my life.

Every unit I come to I see somebody getting released, I be like damn, how come that just can't be me? I been here since August 11, 2008 and I miss my family. At first I was stressing in here for like a week! Not eating, cryin' at night like damn, you should've listened to your mind and you wouldn't be in here! I was just reading books to get by and it helped.

After my 1st week I was cool then I went to Max 2 and seein' moms through a glass window and you can barely hear because other people talking loud! I hugged my mom for the 1st time in four weeks, man it felt good. At that you have a time limit in Max cause other people have to see their parents too. I'm used to this shhh now. This like my 4th or 5th Beat Within.

It's all over now, cause when I get out I'm movin on to bigger and better thangs. Got lil' nieces looking up to me, so I gotta show them what's right. I'm a still move mean but in a different way, cause I'm a stay bockin' for all my ninjas. That's all Beat till next week, hopefully at camp by then. Damn my ninja got six years in YA!! That's all for now Beat, I'm out Room Time.

**-Thinker, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you've gone through a lot with the system, and you want to be there for your nieces to make sure they don't get stuck in it too. But showing them what's right isn't going to happen unless you're doing what's right. You have to lead by example. Listen to your mind!

## Advice For Friends

Yes, every time my friends or family talk to me about their problems, I listen very careful and give them good pieces of advice or suggestions!...

I remember my friend talked to me about his girl problems he was having, and so I gave my friend an advice about his girl. He ended up listenin' to me, and the next day he came to me and thanked me! I had gave my friend girl advice because I already been through all the girl problems... A-Z, you name 'em! And so from my experience I could help others to make good decisions...

For example, when I get out, I'ma tell my "real" friends that jail doesn't make you cool like I used to think! The best advice I'ma give out to my friends and family is make good decisions! I'ma tell my friends to stop hanging out with the wrong people because they are the ones that get you in to trouble!

**-Chuy Jr, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We hope that your friends can take your excellent advice so they can learn from your mistakes without having to make them themselves. We're very interested in the lesson you've learned that "jail doesn't make you cool" like you used to think. What did you expect jail to be like before you got here, and how is the reality different from what you thought?

## Positive Things

There are many things I've never done and will never get the chance to do. Positive things because the negative is the reason why I'll never do them. Life is too precious. Taking a risk is cool to do at the moment, and you can say you done it. But that can also work in the opposite direction. You can wish you never would have done it, but it's already done.

Like I said taking risks is cool for that moment. What about the day after? Week after? Month after? Years after? That risk may be a mistake. Think of what you want to do well. Well enough that it feels like you've already done it but physically haven't. Really think about it! Do you still want to do it? If yes good! If no good! Just make sure when you say I've done that, you feel good about it with a smile on your face! Don't end up saying yes while feeling stupid with your head down, regretting. I wish some one could ask me the same thing but there's nothing I could do.

**-JonJon, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** You have learned such an important lesson on your own. Although we feel terrible that this is the way you have to learn your lesson, we thank you for sharing these wise questions with us. This is a very good tool for folks to really consider what they want to do before making a final decision.

## The Danger Zone

If you a kid stay home in the danger zone  
You can catch a bullet to the dome in the danger zone  
You put ya' life on loan in the danger zone  
Watch where you roam in the danger zone  
You better always have your chrome in the danger zone  
If you got stuck then it's on in the danger zone  
Ninjas will follow you home in the danger zone  
My brother didn't make it home from the danger zone  
For the people who got family in the war in Iraq that thinks it's unfair.

My family is in an undeclared war everyday in the danger zone

a.k.a. the streets of West Oakland.

**-Greg a.k.a. G3, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** You're definitely right when you talk about people are worrying about the war in Iraq, when there's a war out on these streets. It's like the government is more worried about what's going on in other countries, instead of worrying about what's going in the communities in our own country. But you can't leave it up to other people. You have to look out for your own community 'cause it's up to the people that actually live in the community to be leaders. 'Cause if you don't look out for yourselves then no one else will either.



## Another Chance

Never again will I walk through the Halls of J.J.C. Never again will I pick up a firearm and get myself locked up. I was facing one year and two months for exhibiting a fire arm in a rude and angry manner. My parents were so disappointed in what I did. I would always do what I wanted, and I always got away with everything till this. I was already on probation and two days after I got put on probation I violated. When I went to court the judge was just so shocked that I violated. He had just seen me about a week before for some other charges, but he gave me a chance.

I don't think there's a chance for me this time. I went to court for a whole month trying to fight my case, the looks I got weren't so good. I went to court once again for my sentencing I was either going to get 365 days in boot camp or the electric monitor. When I stepped in the court room the judge looked like he was already tired seeing me, I looked back and see my mom crying. I tell my attorney to give the judge a letter that I wrote as he was reading it the D.A. and my attorney were arguing back and forth. The D.A. wanted to send me to the camp but my attorney was fighting for me to get another chance. The judge gets the court room under control and looks at me as he reads "I'm going to give you one more chance, you're gonna be held thirty more days in custody and three months on the monitor."

I get out soon and I can't wait. I also thank my family for showing me so much support. I would always take my freedom for granted but now I know not to because I know how it feels to be locked up and behind these walls. Never again will I walk through these Halls.

**-Marcos, Fresno**

**From The Beat:** You have so much potential for it to be lost and locked away. We hope you are able to stay away from whatever brought you to J.C.C and turn your life in a different direction. We are glad to have met you, but we never want to meet up with you again in this setting.

## Foreign Meddling

What's up Beat? This is Chignon just dropping a couple lines here about teasing. I feel that some of our government officials are bullies because if they see something they don't like in another country, they feel the need to put their two cents in. This especially happens to the smaller countries.

I feel like our government officials do what they want because they know that we've got a strong military and one that is ready for war. I know our government has nukes and they are just waiting to let them loose. I believe World War III will start because of our government. Screw our government! If WWII doesn't happen then I think there is going to be a civil war and I am on my own side.

**- Chignon, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Yes, it's widely documented that the U.S. military industrial complex (includes projects and operations led by the Pentagon) has been meddling in the affairs of foreign countries without its tax paying citizens' approval and without being accountable through providing honest reports about spending and allowing for outside investigations. We totally understand your frustration, but we also urge you to be involved in using rights as a citizen, using the pen as a powerful tool to educate others about this very problem, and analyzing what went wrong that has allowed the government and the military to act so severely without our consent.

## All Types of Drugs

Its all types of drugs, crack, powder, weed, Epills, heroin, crystal meth, shrooms, and alchohol. It's many more and they all have different effects. They could be your down fall, especially crack, meth and heroin, them drugs could really mess up your life. Have you do things you would not think of doing if you were not doing them drugs.

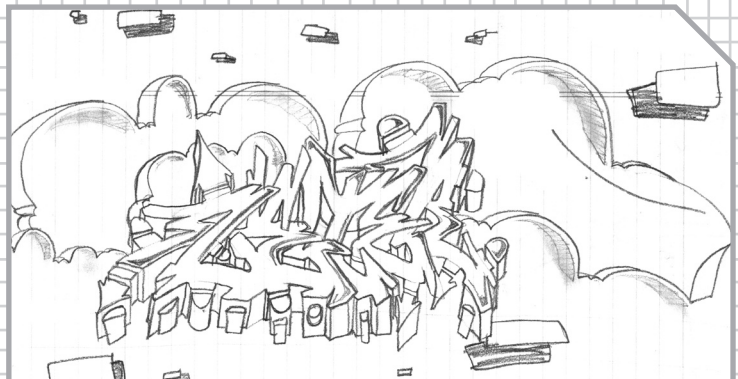
They are hard drug--you would steal your baby toys, clothes and any other stuff that is worth somethin' and sell it. It's just not right but other drugs like weed, epills, and Boa is kind of like a recreational drug, people use it to have fun or do other things, but they won't do things that a crack or heroin addict would do.

Some people smoke weed for medical purposes so them are light drugs and you cold get boa from a pharmacy, it's used for medical purposes, some people take it to get high. I'm one of them people. I smoke weed and sip boa but I will never go anything harder than that.

But there are bad uses and good uses like I said before, some are hard and some are not. There is all types of drugs, some bad some good in some people eyes. But I will tell you crack, meth and heroin are bad in people eyes except the addicts. Even the people that sell it to them know it's bad but they do it to get money.

**-Boobie, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** It's clear from everything you wrote that you've seen what all these drugs do to people. We agree it's best to stay away from what you call the hard drugs. We need better jobs for people so they don't have to sell drugs to make money.





## Wishing on A Star

I'm wishing on a star  
 To follow where you are  
 I'm wishing on a dream  
 To follow where you be  
 I'm wishing on a star, girl  
 Because I hate to be locked up, in the hall, girl  
 Baby girl it's you and me, and that's all I need  
 My love for you is strong  
 And I hope you like this song  
 And I hope you like this song  
 Because it comes from my heart  
 And you said nothing could do us apart  
 I need you by my side  
 Because I'm doing hard time  
 I heard at night you cry for me  
 But I need you to believe in me  
 I remember the rainy days  
 When we used to make love all day.  
 I wrote them on my calendar  
 And they were spectacular  
 Like the fireworks in July  
 And you said your heart was mine  
 I'm wishing on a star  
 To follow where you are  
 I'm wishing on a dream  
 To follow where you be  
 Now I don't know if you remember me,  
 But I remember you,  
 My life is desired  
 And many want my head  
 The truth is that I don't care if death  
 Gets in my way  
 I'm still here  
 After saying that I'm gone  
 But I'm loving you from dusk to dawn  
 When I used to see your face  
 I thought I was possessed  
 You said your love for me was so real  
 But now I see your heart is harder than steel  
 All you wanted was money  
 And that's why you called me honey  
 You broke my heart in two  
 Now there's tears on my pillow  
 And it's all because of you  
 And I hope that, somebody does that to you.

**-El Mariguanote, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Like we said, you're not a man until a woman breaks your heart. Did being with her teach you some things about what you want from a relationship next time? What kind of a girl would make you happy? And what kind of a man will you want to become in order to find that girl?

## Having Fun Without Drugs Or Alcohol

Having fun without drugs or alcohol is better, because your attitude stays the same. You don't have to worry about your high coming down, or keeping it up. Being sober is better.

I think I'm much more happier when I'm sober. I suggest to teens to stay clean and sober, it's much more healthier, and you won't have to worry about getting caught up by the police for being under the influence. You should just have good clean fun. Drugs or alcohol won't make anything better, it will only get you into trouble.

**-Amber, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is good advice, although it can be hard to follow when friends are getting high or drinking. Do you find it difficult to convince your crew to have good, clean fun, or are they down with that mindset too?



## Stay Out Of The Jails And Graves

The best advice I ever gave was telling my patna to stay out of the jails and stay out of the graves.  
 Listen to my words and you will be saved from being considered a modern day slave. Locked up like an animal in a room instead of a cage.  
 Cleaning up after other people like some type of maid.  
 Stuck between walls you trapped in a maze.  
 The food we are fed is worse than a slap in the face.  
 Getting violated for every little thing like a crack in a vase.  
 Less than 10 seconds to fight then they spray you with mace.  
 Been here so many times got me hating this place.  
 Slowing me down from my paper chase.  
 Stressed out got me ready to blaze.  
 Used to be able to roll up and puff on some grapes.  
 I know they ain't going to put that last line in. the best I just needed something to say but hey!

**-Real Mackin', Alameda**

**From The Beat:** This is a great poem, Real Mackin'. Have you ever listened to your own advice? And if not, will you start to now?

## Too Much Drama: Pairs and Couples

Lisa: uhhh: I literally hate you....You make me sick to my stomach.  
 Lamonte: what do you mean Lisa? I do everything I can do for you.  
 Lisa: what? You don't do anything for me. You are never home you don't give me any money.  
 Lamonte: what are you talking about babe? I take you on expensive trips to the islands, I took you on the best cruise ships ever and I gave you some money this morning.  
 Lisa: wow, little trips on little ships. That ain't nothing. Plus, you only gave me one hundred dollars.  
 Lamonte: how much more do you need?  
 Lisa: I need one million dollars.  
 Lamonte: okay, now you are just speaking nonsense.  
 (Lamonte's brother walks into the room.)  
 Leo: hey guys, I'm just getting off work  
 (Leo notices the tension in the room)  
 Leo: oh, okay, who cheated  
 Lamonte: no one. But girlfriend here is not thankful, at all!  
 Lisa: no, just too good for you  
 Leo: well, I think, Lisa, you do need to be more grateful.  
 Lisa: screw that I'm leaving  
 Leo: well, maybe my brother is too good for you

**-Young Voice, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** We love reading your dialogues, Young Voice, keep 'em coming!



## Having Fun

I'm a very spontaneous person with a very outgoing personality, so having fun without any substances has never been a problem. I can't say that I don't enjoy being on one to put a little umph in the environment -I highly do enjoy it- but I know that now I gotta really change it up and be sober at all times.

I ain't tryna get caught up in nothing no more and while I'm at it, I can keep my mind and body healthy too. So, it's not going to be too bad. Most definitely, I'm back to business when I'm up and out this mess. I'm back to wild'n out...just without crime!

**-Vanessa**

**From The Beat:** That's definitely going to be your number one challenge on the outs: having fun like a normal teenager without getting caught back up in the system. It is very difficult... you probably have heard how many people get locked up for parole or probation violations. So you have to take it very seriously. For a while, you won't be able to do stuff your friends are doing because it could land you right back in the hall. Start planning for how you will deal with these tempting and complicated situations now! It is not going to be easy, but your freedom is worth it.

## Having Fun Without Drugs/Alcohol

One of the times I had fun without drugs or alcohol was when my mom, me, my little brother and my Uncle went to the beach. We went up south somewhere to go to the beach and we stayed in a hotel for 2-3 days.

We went to the beach and played football and went in the ocean and we looked for seashells. The best part about it was that I was with my family. When I get out that's all I want to do. I want to be with my family, get a job, graduate high school, and be happy again, and live a successful life.

**-Brandyn**

**From The Beat:** It's great that you feel close to your family and that you can all enjoy life together. If you put all your efforts towards your long term goals instead of your day to day living, you can make it happen for yourself.

## Blow Me Away

They fall in line, one at a time ready to play  
Caught inside this tidal wave  
Your cover's blown, nowhere to go holding your fate  
Only I will walk alone.  
Fix your guns it's time to go.  
Blow me away, only the strongest will survive  
Send me to heaven when we die  
I have a shadow on the wall  
I'll be the one to save us all  
There's nothing left so save your breath, holding your fate  
Only I will walk alone  
Fire your guns its time to go  
Blow me away, only the strongest will survive  
Lead me to heaven when we die  
I have a shadow on the wall  
I'll be the one to save us all  
You wanted it back  
Only the strongest will survive  
Lead me to heaven when we die  
I have a shadow on the wall  
It'll be the one to save us all, save us all.

**-Wylie Coyote**

**From The Beat:** We are definitely blown away from your writing. It is very deep and we want to know why you write, and what inspires you to write such deep poetry. What do you mean by this piece? We get a sense of lonesome in your piece. But tell us what you mean. You will go to heaven, but leave a shadow on the wall (on Earth)? If only the strongest survive, how will you be the one to save us all?

## Life

Life is crazy. People get killed. Shot, stabbed, jumped, strangled, raped, abused, beat. Life makes people go crazy. People act bad or kill because of things that happened in their life. People have good days in their life, but they also have bad ones.

**-Raymond**

**From The Beat:** While what you write is true, it's not all there is. There are negatives in the world - a lot of pain and suffering. We challenge you to look for the positives and find the good in people and in communities.

## Me and My People

Been to the hall 10 times and the kid still learnin' '  
'Cause I was high off them drugs and my brain still burning'  
Only thing I ever knew was them guns and that reefa.  
I'm an emotional ass ninja when I'm high off that ether  
Tell my ninjas that I love 'em I never ever leave 'em  
As long as the kid still here eyes open and I'm breathin'  
I'm a keep it real wit' 'em tell the truth 'cause I love 'em,  
Treat 'em just like family put nobody else above 'em  
Syrup got a ninja leanin' and that purple got me feelin'  
like I'm dreamin'  
Livin' life for a reason money got a ninja  
So they got a ninja sneezin'  
man I wish we was together  
'cause it's hard times dawg ...  
....so we needin' one another.

**-Lil' Purp**

**From The Beat:** The thing about the weed, the syrup, the drink, it makes the pain o away for a little while, and it's "fun" but it ends up being the wrong kind of fun. When you are locked up, you find other ways to make the pain go away. What are they? And what if you continued to rely on them when you get out, so you can stay sharp out there?

## A Few Days Left

Six days left to my court date.  
Hope everything go good.  
Because I'm ready to get out and go back to the hood.  
Fire up a blunt pass it if you could.  
Play with my nose  
Go to the club in sip hella blow.  
Hop in the car in ride like a all star.  
Go to the house in fix hella food an' chill  
Back in get in a good ass mood  
but while I'm in here listen to  
Thomas say what he going to do.

**-Charles**

**From The Beat:** You have a baby out there, and a family waiting for you. So we know that in real life if you got out, you'd have better things to do than coke and weed and drinking and going to clubs. Otherwise, you'd end up right back here, or worse!

## Advice for Myself

One advice I give myself is to stay out of here and not come back once I get out of here.

I'll stay out of here by stop doing drugs and focus more on school. I'm going to attend school every day, do my homework and get my work done.

Other advice I give myself is to help my family, especially my mom. I help my mom by helping her take care of my month old lil' brother.

**-Martine**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you have great advice for yourself - all you've got to do is follow through on it. The long term stuff will come through - for now just focus on going to school every day and getting your homework done when you get out.

## Why World?

Why take her away  
Not a single letter  
Not one phone call  
It's been 5 months now  
Since I've heard her beautiful voice  
Since I've even said "Hi"  
Why world  
Why take her away  
And it's not just me  
It's everyone in here  
In the whole system  
Everyone can pitch that free  
Can cover it all up not for long  
When you're in that room  
All you do is think ...you reflect  
Not about the boo but  
Your special girl  
Your everything  
Why world why take her away  
All ya want is that beautiful free  
The smooth hand in years together  
To hold her close to be her protection  
Just the small of her perform one more time  
Never to leave her side  
But can't even get to her  
Her beautiful green eyes  
To feel the peace and confronted her last.  
To feel her hair in your finger  
As you lay together again  
For one last time to just get lost  
In her presence alone  
Why world  
Why take her away  
That one special girl  
To me she was my everything  
My angel  
My baby  
Now she's gone  
Why world  
Why take her away?

-Sunshine

**From The Beat:** She was your everything for a while, but then when you got locked up you changed all your priorities and started seeing other things that mattered more to you - like your freedom. Once you have gotten your freedom back and learned how to enjoy it and treasure it, you will find that true love, we're sure of it.

## Best Thing in Juvenile Hall

The best thing in juvenile hall  
is when that door comes open  
and you outside your room.  
Every time I wake up I work in  
the morning and every time my door opens,  
I'm thankin' God, don't get me wrong, I'm thankin'  
God every day I wake up. Another thing  
best about the hall is school. School  
is another thing I like in here.  
If I were on the outs I would  
go to school if I wanted, in here it's  
mandatory. I like to go then I know  
I'm getting all my credits when  
I get out. Till next time I'll write back.

-Lil' HyFee

**From The Beat:** It's great that you're enjoying school, and we hope that you'll continue to go regularly once you're out. If you're going to school and doing your work, you know you'll be getting your credits in on the outs too.

## Got To Get Out This Mess

Q-vo? Life's a real dog right now... but I dressed her and now I have to deal with it...this system is real messed up...real careless...sometimes people do deserve what happens with them but sometimes these people throw away our life with group homes or hella time...like it's nothing.

I mean, what can I get from a group home? I come from a loving family, although we can be dysfunctional. At these places, these females can be way out of pocket. I'm a person with self-concern and like to have fun. I don't care about others...I do what I do. I make what makes me happy happen. I love my family and man.

I'm just too good for all that mess, but to the system I ain't too good...they don't see people's true colors. They don't give a damn or give us the time to care about who we really are...they just see what's written on paper. Both my middle fingers up to the system...and to anybody and everybody that ever doubted me. I'm gonna get out this mess.

-Vanessa

**From The Beat:** The system doesn't do a good enough job meeting the educational and social support needs of detainees, we agree with you there. But, nowhere in your piece do you step up and take personal responsibility for the activities that landed you in this institution. What do you plan to do differently in the future to maintain your freedom and independence? If you're out there doing crimes, you can't place all the blame on the system. Take responsibility.

## It's Hard to Change

When you are raised in the hood it's hard to change because the only thing you go by is letting them shells rain.

-Lil' Rich

**From The Beat:** What do you get out of letting them shells rain besides more time to gain? It's easy to mess up, and just live in the system for the rest of your life, but it's hard to change and take care of yourself for the rest of your life.

## The Hall Ain't Cool

Been in the hall five months time going slow  
This shhh get on my nerves,  
Cleanin' the next man flo'  
Lights on all night so you barely get some sleep  
Plus the food hella nasty sometimes you don't eat  
Go to school in the morning head spinnin'  
So you can't learn cause you worried 'bout the streets  
School the last you concerned  
Visitin' family through the glass no hugs no kisses  
This is the generation of killas no love all disses  
Get rec for an hour sometimes even less  
These just some lil' things that I'm gettin' off my chest  
Free Doug just left to the four  
I'm a miss that ninja  
Man all BS to the side  
Then we back in the hall same shhh  
A different day, gotta adjust to new staff  
'Cause they do it a different way  
I hate Juvenile Hall  
I swear this shhh ain't cool to everybody going ...home  
stay out don't be a fool.

-Lil' Purp

**From The Beat:** This is another great piece, Lil Purp, because you really break down the stress of being in the hall. Even those of us who haven't ever been locked up for a long time can feel what it's like - worrying about the streets, having friends get shipped off, adjusting to staff, waiting on rec. And then at the end you say "stay out." But as you know it's easier said than done, especially when the street is all you know. Do you plan to follow your own advice/ And if so, how?

## She makes me feel right

The hug I got was July 10th before I got handcuffed. My girl hugged me. It was a love hug, a going away hug, and I'm going to miss you hug. Bye, bye hug kind of made me want to cry tears but I'm suppose to be a man. So did not cry I sucked it up.

So I basically was sad my whole way to the police station under investigation. Wishing I could be at home with my family. I know when I was in the police car my girlfriend probably thinking of me. Stressed over me cause I was going to jail. When I got to jail she wrote me three letters every day. So I won't really be stressed out.

**-Lil' Shig**

**From The Beat:** Your writing creates a strong picture and emotional feeling when you write about the kind of hug your girlfriend gave you. Sounds like you are a lucky man to hold the love of your family and girlfriend even when you are far away. Maybe the stressful part comes in figuring out how you gonna proceed from here. Is being close to these people important enough that you'll make some changes? If so, how are you going to make sure you get to be up close to them and not locked away? If not, why choose this life if you got other choices?

## My New Boo

He's all I need in a man. He's intelligent and kind, he's sexy and can get wild. He's tall and light brown, he's fine and all mine. I'm crazy about him. He's never disrespected me. He never gave me a reason to not trust him.

He's been there for me when I didn't expect him to be. He has shown me love when I was down. He gave me strength when I was weak. He's my man and now I'm complete. So best of luck to him and me.

**-Keeyana**

**From The Beat:** He sounds like a great guy, but please take a deep breath and keep your feet on the earth. You still have to take care of yourself in terms of your safety, health, and education. That said, enjoy the incredible high that is new love!

## Behind Closed Eyes

Reality is often a cold perception  
Bad things can happen without question  
And nobody is an exception to this harsh truth  
Life is easier behind closed eyes  
That way your life will never be demise  
You could do as you please and have every thing you need  
Life is easier with your eyes closed

**- Mackin' Nam**

**From The Beat:** We like your words, rhythms and rhymes here but it's hard at times to get the sense of what you're saying. What do you mean by closed eyes? Are you referring to people being in denial? When a person is alive, they are always vulnerable to dying and cannot usually do as they please without some consequences. We'd like to hear more.

## Role Model

My whole family believe in me, and I feel like I let them down by putting myself in this white man system.

It's hard because my little brother and sister look up to me and it's hard to talk to them through letters. Kids aren't allowed in here.

My family always tells me to keep my head up and stay strong. My little brother asks me how do I stand being in jail. I tell him time does itself all you have to do is show up.

**-Lil' Nef**

**From The Beat:** It must be so hard to be so far away from them and not be able to see them. We want to know how are you going to teach them how to do right? We think the best example you can give them is to learn from your own mistakes...Got any plans for that so you/they don't have to go through this again?

## Having Fun Without Drugs And Alcohol

Last time I had fun without drugs and alcohol was when me and my family went to Florida. We was just hanging out and going places, cracking up.

I was hecka laughing. I mostly always have a good time with my family regardless if I'm under the influences or not. I was sixteen years old.

**-Danielle**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you have an awesome family and you guys enjoy hanging out together. You're very lucky!

## Elders

What is it, why do they say  
When I was your age I had to walk ten miles to school.  
You could get five king size candy bars for a nickel.

I learned to swim when I was five,  
I had a job when I was nine,  
It was so safe you didn't have to lock your door.  
We couldn't walk ten feet away from the porch,  
Why do they say when I was your age I was just like you:

**-Bill Gates**

**From The Beat:** Good question! We'd love to know the answer. But part of it might be because people's lives change so fast - there's technology, there's rising crime rates, so much changes, and yet people stay the same in their hearts. Is there a particular elder who speaks this way to you?

## Mom's Update

Hey Beat it's me again...Well I got to see my mom this past Saturday. She looks wonderful...my step dad on the other hand he looks like shhh I got more bad news, my brother has to get heart surgery I'm hella sad because my brother is the one and only thing I care about ( and my other family) I would die for him. He's my best friend.

And he could die! And I'm in here man I can't believe I'm saying this but could life get any worse? It better not because I don't want to go bad. But my prego auntie she's doing good and probably getting bigger by the day. Me, oh and me...Well let me tell you about me I'm doing so horrible that dogshhh probably feels better. Peace.

**-Haley**

**From the Beat:** Between your mother, your brother, and the daily stress of lockdown, it must be a real challenge every day to stay positive and hold yourself together. It's good to hear that your mom seems to be holding up, though, congratulations. You're in our thoughts!

## Sometimes I think

Sometimes I ask myself am I mentally ready to leave this place. I know I'm physically ready because I've been physically ready to leave here every time I come. But I was never mentally ready--that's why I always end up back.

But this time I gonna make sure that I don't make the same mistakes I've made before. So I ask God to help me get my mind right so I won't end up in this same situation. So I got to get out and make some changes in the way I live. But if worst comes to worst I know I still got my old ways to go back to, but that's my last resort.

**-Chippa**

**From The Beat:** That's exciting, when you're actually mentally ready to leave, and not come back. Good for you. We hope you're out there right now working your program and trying to get your mind right like you talked about here. It takes a lot to change, but you can do it. You gotta want it badly enough, make plans and follow through with them, get clear on what your temptations are, and then practice how you gonna stay away from what will undoubtedly try to suck you back into your old life. You are an intelligent young man, and we hope you value yourself enough to do the hard work, the struggle, and keep the faith. We wish you much success!



## The Best Advice I Ever Gave

Don't come to jail. I hate this place. I've only been here two weeks and it's been like hell. I miss my mama, my sisters, my brother Dijon, my papa and my granny, and my girl Adriann.

My advice is that if you ain't been here before don't come here, and if you have don't come back.

When I get out I'm going to spend more time with my family and with my girl and be a role model two my little brother and sister. I want to stay off the streets 'cause ain't nothing good coming from them.

**-Tell Bang**

**From The Beat:** That's some great advice, but do you think you can follow your own advice. We don't wanna see you come back too. You have a family that cares for you and some siblings to take care of. So get out there and don't let the streets distract you from doing what you said you wanna be doing. And that's looking out for your fam.

## If You Were Me

I'm the sun, the almighty.

If you could only could be me,  
what a surprise that would be.

I live for the stars,

I would die for the sky,  
what am I.

I'm a stone in the lake

I quake while I shake

shimber me timber,

I love winter.

A bird in the sky,

a fish in the water

I will die come summer.

Float like the wind

soars like an eagle

eat breadcrumbs like a seagull.

If you were I what would you be?

**-Boo Nasty**

**From The Beat:** Sweet piece man! Full of good images that create visual/sensory pictures. Makes us wonder how many folks in the hall get to think about or remember the natural world. Sometimes we get so caught up in the craziness of our cities that we forget the enormous natural world out there that is where we all started from, that gives some of us some feeling of belonging to something bigger than all of us.

## Long-Ago Hugs

The last hug I got was a good with greeting and my auntie gave me a hug and kiss and I was happy. When my aunt gave me hug she was happy and feeling good about everything.

After she gave me a hug I left and got in my car and I was riding around having fun with my girlfriend. Having a lot of fun.

**-Marcellou**

**From The Beat:** That sounds like a long time ago and far away. Sounds like you miss these times. Does it help or hurt to think about them now? Or some of both?

## Thank You

I would like to thank unit #8 staff. I appreciate you for all the things you've done for me, all the wisdom, knowledge and love you've given to me.

I will miss you all. You know I'm gonna call you guys everyday. I love you unit #8.

**-Savage**

**From The Beat:** You are missed, too! Everyone hopes you are doing well on the outs. We miss your humor and great writing during Beat workshops.

## A Caged Bird

I feel like a caged bird.

A nail lost in a field of hay

A baby who can't yet talk

Being here without you

Makes me stomach turn

My head hurt

But my body yearn

I'm drowning in this pool of sadness

Waiting to be saved by you

Because it's you that I miss

Eventually our paths will cross

And we'll meet again

But until then

I'll sit and wait.

**-Missing You**

**From The Beat:** Like Maya Angelou said, and now we know why the caged bird sings. Keep singing! And next time - be sure to sign your name, too!

## Want To Make a Change

Hey what's up with you? My name is Samera but I go by Me-Me. Today, I have been feeling kind of down because it is my boyfriend's birthday and I am in here. I wish I could tell him happy birthday and give him a big hug.

I am so in love with him and it hurts to be away on an important day like this one. I am very depressed that I messed up and ended back up in here. The next time I get released, I for sure won't be back. I really want to start doing well in life.

**-Samera**

**From The Beat:** One thing you can do right now that might help you feel less depressed is start thinking about specific changes you can make on the outs.

## Mad as Hell

Mad as hell right now wish I was out  
probably gotta do time is what I found out,

But I'm going through some thangs

people don't understand on my way to Santa Rita 'bout to be a grown man,

Partner just died so my head on spin

Everything twisted so my case I'm tryin' to win,

So stressed out that the kid wants to fight

I need to get out I swear Juvenile Hall ain't right.

**-Lil' Purp**

**From The Beat:** It's good to see that instead of going off on staff, getting locked up, or hurting yourself somehow, you just put your rage and disappointment on a piece of paper. That's what great artists do - they turn their emotions into a message for the world to feel.

## From Mexico, I Remember

I remember when I was goin' to kindergarten with all my vezinos (neighbors)

I remember my first time I got in trouble what my abuelita

I remember my abuelito telling me stories of when he was un niño (kid)

I remember when I was kicking it with my primos

I remember when all my familia was together

I remember when I got suspended when I was in primary grado (grade)

**-G-Baby**

**From The Beat:** We want to hear more of your memories - you could bring a poem like this straight up to the present day!

## The Best Advice I Ever Gave

The best advice I ever gave was when I was chilling with my partners and I told them that if they ever were to get caught for something they did, or that someone else did, was that they should keep their mouth shut, and never snitch on their partner.

That way they could keep it solid and by the time they were released they would be good to walk through their turf.

**-Sanchillo**

**From The Beat:** Instead of telling them not to tell when they get in trouble, you should tell them to not get in trouble. That way they don't get put in that predicament.

## Being Kind

People who disrespect me get disrespected back. If you're nice to me, I'll be nice to you. I am just regular.

I am quiet and stay out of the way. If someone asks me a question, I answer.

**-Joloni**

**From The Beat:** You're not just regular you are a special unique person. Not everyone thinks like you. We're glad to see that you have some kind of manners. A lot of people your age don't see things the way you see them. Why do you think that is? How can you get people to respect each other and avoid any kind of confrontations?

## Waiting to Hit the Hood

What's up Beat. This the one and only Jr. from Newark and on my mind is I'm waiting to go to my group home, they be taking for ever to pick me up but it's good tho 'cause I still be postin' it with the homies talking 'bout females and what we gone do when we go get out.

And o my god I miss kick'n it with females an all that good stuff but I'm finna cut it short an say what's up till I'm back in the hood.

**-Jr.**

**From The Beat:** Do your program at the group home and figure out how to make the changes that will keep you free, so you can enjoy your life and important relationships!

## Having Fun Without Drugs

The last time I had fun without smoking was like a year ago. When I went to the movies with my female and saw Saw III. I had lots of fun looking at her scream and jump.

I love spending time with my girlfriend; she is always there for me. And after we left the movies she bought me a bag and I had a fat blunt.

**-Robz**

**From The Beat:** Well at least you seen the movie sober. We ain't gonna sit here and tell you what you shouldn't be doing, but do what you need to do to stay out of trouble. Spend more time with your girl if you think she can keep you out of trouble.

## Miss My Hood

I miss my hood; I wish I could go back because I left all my patnas. I was away from my hood for a minute. Nothing changed since I left. Now all my patna's are getting locked up. I know when I get out the hood ain't going to be the same because of all the new booty people going to mess it up.

**-hood sickness boy**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like things changed a lot on the outs while you been inside. Nobody likes change. It's hard. But this could be a big opportunity for you. What's changed inside you? You got plans to do things differently? How can you use this time to find new ways of doing things yourself so you don't have to waste your time locked away instead of out there being free

## The Last Hug From Mom

The last hug I got was from my mom during visiting before I came to max. I was still in intake so I went to the visiting room with everyone else. I was upset because I couldn't leave and go home with my moms. I was thinking about what I was missing down on the outs.

**-Young Markie Bo**

**From The Beat:** Yeah, it can really hit you that you are locked up when your loved one is walking away and you can't go with her. Sounds like you really love and miss your mom-can you use that memory to help you do right the next time you are tempted to do something to get you into the same mess again?

## An Interview

What happened?

I'm in here for two robberies. I robbed somebody on the bus.

How many times have you been to the Hall?

Four. The first time I was a youngster.

Who do you live with?

My momma.

What's her job?

Being my mama! My mom works security, she works evenings and two nights.

Do you have brothers and sisters?

Yes two sisters and one brother.

Older or younger?

Older. My oldest brother and sister live by themselves.

I don't see my brother that much. I like him, but I don't talk to him that much either.

Who do you talk to most?

My mama and sister.

How old is your sister?

She's seventeen.

Do you look alike?

People say I look like my daddy. I go visit him in L.A. The last time I went was the first week of school, we went to the YMCA and to the movies, but I don't remember what movies...

Are your parents mad you are in here?

It wasn't mad, 'cause they don't get mad with me. I wouldn't talk to them if they try to scold me, I'd just turn my back on them. My mama never scolded me, so I'm not used to it.

How do you feel in here?

I want to go home.

**-Anthony**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for sharing a little bit about your family and life in this interview. You have a lot of love and support waiting for you when you get out. Have you thought about how you can use that support to stay strong and keep out of trouble?

## Jail

Man, Jail is freaking boring. I thought I'd never come back to jail, and then haha look, I'm back at jail. I hate this place, and now my mom is stressing, and I don't know when I'm getting out.

But when I do get out I'm gonna really try to do good and be on the right path so I won't have to come back. But while I'm in here I can plan what I'm gonna do on the outside.

**-Lil J-tuda**

**From The Beat:** Jail is boring, and it's not meant to be fun. Think about it, if jail was fun crime would be at an all time high. On the other hand you can exercise, read, and educate yourself. You can also start making plans that way when you get out you can keep yourself busy and not get into any trouble.

## Fun With No Illegal Stuff

I can remember a time when I had fun without drinking or using any drugs. It was my little brother's b-day. He was turning 10. We went to "Cewl Canyon" (its like a beach) and we swam, and me and my brother and his friends had fun.

Afterwards we went to eat at McDonald's and went home. My little brother opened his presents and ate cake. I had fun 'cause my little brother had fun. That's why I want to get out of here 'cause my little brother looks up to me and I don't want him here.

**-Chucky**

**From The Beat:** That's great that you can have fun without drugs. You seem to have your heart in the right place as you wanna get out and do good so you can be a role model for your brother. You made a mistake, it's all good, we all make mistakes. Just learn from it, and get out and do the things you're telling us that you wanna do.

## The Lady Was Wrong

What's up Beat, what was brought to my attention was this lady from The Beat was wrong about what she said talking bout everybody that come to jail is either high or drunk.

I said what make you think that she said cause of statistics say so I said well I ain't part of the statistics. So don't say everybody, I'm tired of statistics stereotyping us. Shhh that's all I really got to say for today.

**-Silly B**

**From The Beat:** It's good to hear you fighting back. You are NOT part of the statistics. But the statistics aren't about you per se, they're about the way that alcohol and drugs can lead good people to make mistakes and come to jail. We hope you never ever become part of those numbers.

## In The Hood

In the hood it's sometimes not good because the 5.0. be tripping and ninjas be slippin', but me, I'll be staying saucy with my wify cause that's gonna keep me out of trouble. But when I get out I'm going to the hood eventually 'cause that's where I get dough, posted by the liquor store. At the same time, while the block stays rolling and while my ninjas eating, I'll be in school working on my education.

**-Lil' T**

**From The Beat:** Lil' T, we can't help but notice how you contradict yourself in your piece. You say you will stay out of trouble and focus on school, but at the same time you say you will be going back to the block to make money. It's time you make a choice which way you want to go....

## Free Me and My Brother

Man me and my brother has been locked up for about 3 and a half years. I haven't talked to him since 06 in the old hall, but to keep it so solid because that's the only way I know how.

**-Lil Miami**

**From The Beat:** That's a long time not to talk to your brother. Were you close growing up? Do you have any idea how he's doing? How are you doing?

## My Girl's Birthday

When I got my girl's nails done on her birthday without her knowing that I was going to do it. And she was surprised, but it felt good and she was happy. She gave me some money and surprised me.

**-Damon**

**From The Beat:** They say that a perfect relationship is one where both people spend a lot of time trying to make the other happy. Do you think you had that kind of relationship? What about now?

## I Don't Give Them Advice

When my homies got problems, I tell them to solve them. I tell them they should find a way to solve their problems. I don't have any advice for them because I haven't learned on my own to stop gangbanging. My uncle, he took my advice because he had a family on the line including me. Yes it changed his life.

The best advice I gave myself is to go to school. No I did not take my advice. No it did not make any difference for myself because I ended up in juvenile hall.

The last time I did something for someone was for my mom. She told me to stay out of trouble and go to school and I did stay out of trouble and I did go to school. But then I turned around and did a stupid thing at the wrong time and place.

**-Danny**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for being so honest about how you look at the issue of giving advice. What advice do you give yourself now? And will you take it this time?

## Today Was A Good Day...

What's good Beat? This is Sleepy.

Today was a good day because I got good news. They told me I'm going to get released sometime next week. I'm really happy about that.

Also it was kind of bad today because I was about to get in a fight with some people and now I want to get out of this unit because I don't want to mess up my release.

Also I'm happy because I'm going to get to touch my little sisters, hug my mom, and call my girlfriend whenever I want.

Also I just can't wait to get to Florida so I can be with all my family because that's what's important.

I really give thanks to God for helping me through all this. He's the main person I thank so when I get there ima change my whole life around and stop gang banging so my mom can be proud.

**-Sleepy**

**From The Beat:** We are glad to hear about all the positive things coming up for you, but as you say, you still have a week left. Don't mess up your chance of freedom by getting involved in negativity while you are locked up. Stay focused on your goal!

## Stay Out Of Trouble

The best advice I ever gave was to my brother. I told him, don't get into trouble with 5-0 'cause it's going to messed up for you afterwards.

**-Edwin**

**From The Beat:** What might help him stay out of trouble with the 5-0? Did you give him any practical tips?

## M-I-Yayo

Last summer me and my little brother flew to Florida to spend time with my big sister. We went to Disney World, Sea World and Universal studio in Orlando. That was the most fun I had in a long time.

The beach was the perfect place for the summer, Florida Miami weather. Beautiful women, clean cool blue water. It was fun. I didn't even think about getting' high out there because there was hella stuff out there to keep me busy. I'll go back when I get out.

**-Nam**

**From The Beat:** That's cool your sister lives there so maybe you can visit out there, or even stay for awhile—get a whole new perspective on life.



## Having Fun Without Drugs

The last time I had fun without drugs or alcohol was when I went to my cousin's house. We played basketball, football, and soccer.

That was the last time I had fun without drugs and alcohol. I also remember when I went ice-skating.

**-Grumpy**

**From The Beat:** We're glad that you can have fun and not do drugs. What other recreational activities can you do that doesn't involve drugs? Can you party and have a good time without doing any drugs?

## The Best Advice I Ever Gave...

Was to my brother I told him to don't ever follow a ninja follow yourself. 'Cause follow the dumb ninja always get you in trouble, like when you rob somebody that ninja gone tell.

So stay to your self and get money because if you don't get money you is a nobody but who cares just do you and it will pay off trust me it will.

By playing football with the guys and going camping with your family you can have fun without drugs or alcohol 'cause it's great to keep your body in shape, and good deeds cause girls to like a real ninja--but if you do use drugs drink or smoke.

**-Julius**

**From The Beat:** Is your brother younger than you? Do you take your own advice? Your brother will learn more from what you do than what you say...

## Best Advice

The best advice I ever gave was one time when I told my friend not to stop at the Trap House 'cause the boys were watching it.

It was that same day that the ATF and the DEA kicked the door down. The people are inside the hall or in prison doing years.

**-Casper**

**From The Beat:** That was great that you warned your friend and he didn't get caught. But more can you tell him. 'Cause even though he didn't get caught that time, he might get caught the next time. You should tell him to leave it alone all together.

## The Last Time

The last time I had fun was a while ago without smoking and drinking I was at my auntie's house with my family and I was playing basketball with my little cousins. It was my cousin's birthday.

I also had fun without getting high on something when my grandma came to visit. I mostly have fun with my loved ones and plan on not getting high any more and continue having fun with my loved ones, then friends.

**-Jarell**

**From The Beat:** How will you approach trying to have fun while staying sober with friends? How will you deal with the "peer pressure" when others offer you stuff?

## My Love, RIP Lil' Vern

What's good cousin? Man I miss you little bro I wish that it would have been me that died I ain't never cried my eyes out like that me and Derrick both went crazy in our own way you feel me. Well love you little cousin.

**-Lil' DeeJay**

**From The Beat:** The key word in this piece is "love". Eventually, the hurt of losing him will fade (it's not as bad now as it was that first day, right)... but the love won't fade. That will be a part of you forever. Peace.

## Waiting On The GPS

Hey Beat this is Young T, still waiting for my GPS release. (It's a new electric monitor that knows where you are at all times.) I'm just waiting for this P.O. to give the paperwork to the GPS people but she's just been lagging on this kid. But it's good 'cause I'm doing my time and not letting the time do me. Still waiting to leave this place.

**-Lil' T**

**From The Beat:** What are you planning to do once you leave this place? Do you think the ankle monitor will help you or hurt you in your efforts to stay on track?

## A Good Deed!

The kindest thing I've ever done was when I went up to my girl's school and took her home, so her mother wouldn't be tripping when she came home late and she wouldn't get a punishment.

**-Jamon**

**From The Beat:** That was very sweet of you to walk your girl home. You a nice dude. Keep doing nice things and nice things will come your way.

## The Best Advice, Don't Runaway!

Once I gave somebody advice—I told that person not to run away from camp. I told him to stay because if you run you are going to get caught and have to come back and do your time all over. I know this because I ran before. Now I am in juvenile hall writing to The Beat.

**- Joe**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you learned from your mistake, and are helping others to learn from it as well. Did that person take your advice?

## Something I've Never Done IS Hug My Mom

Something I've never done that I want to do is to hug mom and tell her I love her and talk about my anger and how much I love her.

Why do we take her flowers now that she's dead and not when she was alive? I love my mom because no matter what I do she's always there for me. I love my mom!

**-Jose**

**From The Beat:** We are not sure if we got it right, but it sounds like your mother has passed away. We are very sorry to hear that. Does her memory help keep you focused on leading a positive life that she would be proud of? What do you think your mom would have wanted for you and your future?

## I Was Happy

The last time I was happy was a Friday before I got lock up because that was the last time I was high and I was with my homies and my family.

**-Goofy**

**From The Beat:** Were you happy because you were with friends and family, or because you were high? Do the two things have to go together? Did drugs and alcohol have anything to do with you getting locked up?

## RIP Carl

When you think about things that happen you get real mad. For me when my brother got killed that was not the best thing. He love to be out side and be with girls. RIP CARL

**-Lacey**

**From The Beat:** We hear that you feel huge grief over losing your brother. How much older was he? Did girls like him too? Do you remember times with him when you were little kids?

## My Girl

Real talk, my girl is bad. Her name is Hope. I know ya'll going to hate on me but you go right ahead. All I know is that my female is solid and she respects me and I respect her too. She does what she wants to I don't stop her from doing shhh. She knows what's right and wrong and I trust her. I'm not saying that I will put my guard down but I know for a fact I can trust her. Hate it or love it I'm me and I don't need any of ya'll making a judgment about me 'cause only God can judge me.

-Tookie

**From The Beat:** We'd love to hear more about this person in your life. How did you meet her? And what does she think about the fact that you are locked up?

## Obama '08

The future is right in front of our eyes.

Obama's got my back...

In the bible it says

"Seek and you will find"

And that's what America's been seeking for the past 100 years.

-Tookie

**From The Beat:** It's exciting to see you writing poetry about the political race that is captivating the country. What do you like about Obama? Why do you mean by your last line?

## Having fun without Drugs/Alcohol

The Last time I ever had fun was when I went to the park with my daughters. I was not under the influence. I did not smoke the whole day or drink. I felt good and I had fun. I did it a couple of times.

-Lynceck

**From The Beat:** This is great experience to consider while planning your future. Your daughters will appreciate you for your thoughtfulness and care of yourself, and them.

## Having Fun With Raider Nation

The last time I remember having fun without being on something was when I went to an Oakland Raiders game with my people. We had fun watching the game and talking about the people at the game and that was the last one I went to.

- Joe

**From The Beat:** What else do you remember about that day? What was the best moment of the game and the crowd?

## The Street Life

Let me start off by saying man I miss the hood. The hood taught me most of the things. Man the hood lace my tennis shoes and strap my boots. The hood been good to me. I don't mean just fast cars and jewelry.

Family first.

-Lil' Nef

**From The Beat:** Did your hood teach you anything we can print in the Beat? We had to edit a little, but would like to see you write about what your hood has taught you from the positive side.

## Big Challenge

I really don't even remember having fun without drugs. Maybe if I thought really hard, I would remember like when I was a lil' kid just having fun without no worries.

But now I got enemies, bills, all types of problems. But that's life, just a big challenge.

-Box

**From The Beat:** You're right, it's definitely a challenge. Hopefully there's light in there too though. Maybe it would be easier to meet the challenges you are faced with without drugs and alcohol.

## Mind Wide Open

Money on my mind, so I'm always on the grind, I'm oh go all the time, so I'm strap with my nine, Any ninja got a problem, let me know it's fo' sure, Eyes barely open and a ninja can't really see, But my mind-open wide so I'm open to the streets Vo.

-Lil' Vo

**From The Beat:** We hope you open your mind wide open for real - open it to the possibility that there is more for you out there than a life on the streets, and the grind will just grind you down into dust, sooner or later. Peace.

## The Best Advice For My Lil' Brother

I gave my lil' brother the best advice-- to stay in sports. I led him on the right path because I used to play football and he always wanted to be like me, and now he's starting quarterback for his team. I just hope he just doesn't follow me now because I messed up.

-Lil' Black

**From The Beat:** That does sound like great advice. Why did you stop playing football? Do you ever think about playing again?

## Home

I need to go home cause I hate this place. And they do not feed me well and need more food here.

-Mikey

**From The Beat:** Make the changes you need to make to never come back!! What do you need to change? How will you do it?

## Shedding No Tears

Didn't do the crime but I ain't shedding no tears but I ain't trippin' it's probably better I'm here because if I wasn't I'll probably be dead. Doin' this time puttin' things in my head...Alot of stuff that's real, real crazy. I'm up in the unit go'n real real manie.

-Lil' Rolo

**From The Beat:** You say you aren't trippin' and then you say that you got crazy things going on in your head... We're also glad that you are here, alive—and think that you have a lot to think about and work out. You're a good writer, that might help.

## Manhood

I think that sometimes men try to act hard. You have to be nice sometimes. Men try to hold there manhood.

Most women don't have any thing to prove. Men try to over power people and get the last word.

-Paul

**From The Beat:** We see this behavior sometimes too. Why do you think men feel like they have to show this part of themselves to the world, and keep the rest private? Why is it different for women?

## Change

I'm trying my best to change so I can do better for myself and others. I'm changing my image for the best. I change 'cause I feel like it. I can do good if want to. I can do bad if I want to. I do my best so people won't judge me. That's why I'm trying to change my ways. I don't care if people judge me now because they don't know me at all.

-Mike

**From The Beat:** What do you want to change about yourself Mike? Forget about others judgments —what do YOU want to see out of your own life?

## The Freshest Prisoner

What's good with Beat? It's ya boy Gully Bub. Let me spit a lil' heat.

I'm in the trap, dog, cookin' up a recipe  
Y'all can't name another cat that can mess with me  
I earned my stripes in this game like a referee  
And you can meet my threat, dog, if you testing me  
I'ma man, you a child destiny  
Dudes claim they fly, but these ninjas ain't fresh as me  
And I'll neva let this game get the best of me  
And like sesame seeds, I am all ova the bread  
Like a brand new fitted cap, I am all up on his head

Yeah, that was a lil' somethin'. Holla at y'all next week.

**-Gully Bub**

**From The Beat:** We had to take out some of your gun-related threats since they are not Beat appropriate. Our advice to you would be to focus on what brings you here and keeps you a prisoner rather than focusing on what you plan to do to anyone else. When you can control yourself and keep yourself free, then you'll have some valuable advice to share.

## Don't Do Drugs

Don't do drugs! That's the best advice I got for a ninja that don't use 'em already. That shhh screws up yo' brain. And you do shih like me and wild out.

**-Pooh**

**From The Beat:** While this is good advice for people who have not started using drugs, it's even better advice for people like you who find themselves prisoners of their own addiction, and then, because of that addiction, prisoners behind walls. If you think rosity — and that there's no more satisfying feeling than helping someone in need.

## Drugs, Alcohol

I remember not using drugs during the weekend I was spending time with my girl the time I got out. I never smoked weed or got drunk 'cause I was having a cool-ass time, not feelin' a buzz 'cause I don't be mad or stressin' 'bout the shhh I been through. I feel a good feeling not to do drugs again and stressin' over some more shhhh. But that's why I'm locked up.

**-Leonard**

**From The Beat:** When you get caught up in drugs and alcohol, it's easy to forget how good it can feel just to do ordinary things with a clear head. We hope you remember the connection between being high and being here so that you can follow through on your wish to keep that good, sober feeling going when you're on the outs.

## Something Good To Look Forward To

What's poppin' with The Beat? This ya boy Drewski back up in this thang again, but it ain't nothing to glorify, so a lot of people need to cut that out. They just told me I got to do these 18 months real quick, but I don't know when it's gone start. I'ma do about two years altogether 'cause I got to do some months in here before I start that.

When I'm done though, I'm gone get my shhh together though, 'cause I'ma have some good shhh to look forward to. I ain't gone let y'all know what it is, but it ain't nothin' illegal. As a matter of fact, it's far from that. So, in about two years when I'm able to holla at The Beat on the streets in my own clothes and not in this unit shhh doing my thing, I'll talk to y'all about it. But till then, I get back at ya.

**-Drewski**

**From The Beat:** We sure hate to see you here again, Drew, so we're hoping that whatever you have in mind for when you touch down is what you say it is, and that it takes you away from places like this and the life that leads to places like this. Will you be doing your 18 months here, or somewhere else?

## More Than A Year Of Sobriety

The last time I did drugs was when I was in the outs in '07. I been sober for more than a year, and it feel good. But I take other types of drugs, psych meds, because I'm not stable in the mind, or that's what the doctors and psychiatrists tell me. But it all good 'cause I'm not going to be on them for the run of my life like they said at first.

**-Young G**

**From The Beat:** We hope, when you touch down, that you remember how good it feels to be off those street drugs so you can add to the foundation of sobriety you've already built. Can you describe to us some of the things that make the psychs say that you're "not stable"? We'd love to read a description that comes from you and not from those examining you.

## It's Gonna Be Ugly

I can't wait to go home  
Been gone for too long  
They playing me up in here  
I'm sick of eating this nasty-ass food  
Not being in them nasty ass-showers  
Been in here for a month  
And it feels like hell  
I'm tired of going in to sleep  
In them disgusting cells  
This shhh ain't fair  
But still they don't care  
I can't wait to go to court  
To see what they say  
It just gone be ugly  
Because they gone play me anyway

**-J M**

**From The Beat:** "They" are playing you? "This ain't fair." What we don't see is any sense of your own responsibility for giving the system the power it needs to "play" you. Unless you did nothing to get here, you need to start looking inside and figuring out just how much control you

## I Love My Forever

I really do love him,  
just don't know how to tell him!  
We both locked up,  
so I ask myself now what!  
Will he ever love me again!  
But when he was in the Ranch, where have I been!  
I don't know what to say! I don't know what to do.  
I really wanna be with him, but I know it will never come true!  
I know I did him wrong!  
Damn, he really is gone!  
No matter how much I tell him I love him  
he won't say yes and let me be with him!  
I kind of sound like I'm begging!  
But I want him to be the one in the wedding!  
I know he got a girlfriend! I know he got a life!  
But deep down inside he really want me to be his wife!  
He would always be my right hand!  
But us not being together I just don't understand.  
I hope he know I love him from the bottom of my heart!  
If he would accept me I would love to have a fresh start!  
I will always love him.

**-Kia Baby**

**From The Beat:** If you've told him how you feel, and he's told you he's not interested — plus he has a girlfriend — then our advice to you is to move on. No boy or man we've ever met is worth breaking up someone else's relationship for and putting yourself in the roll of "the other woman." With both of you locked up, it's clear both of you have pressing issues you need to work on in your own lives before trying to force a relationship that just isn't there.



## Moving Up The Institutional Ladder

What's good with The Beat? This go be my last Beat because they finna send ya boy to 850. It's nothin', my ninja. I'm finna knock this lil' shhh out. But this to all my young ninjas.

Ey, this jail shhh is a set-up. They get you when you young and let you go. They keep doing that shhh over and over until a ninja finally catch a big case. Then they wanna bring all that old shhh up and make it look like a ninja a sophisticated criminal and a menace to society, like you just be doin' hella shhh. It's crazy because I don't be doin' nothin' but bein' a real-ass ninja but look where it got me.

If I could start over, I really wouldn't change shhh. I would just be a lil' more smoother about my decisions. But ey lil' fellas, I ain't tryna tell y'all to change, but stop catchin' these lil' cases because when a ninja get rapped, they bringin' all that shhh up, believe that. I'm not changin'; I'm not tellin' you ninjas to change. Just be smooth about what you ninjas doin' because they playin' a dirty game. Boy this shhh wild.

**-Trill**

**From The Beat:** For the life of us, we can't understand why you would tell young boys not to change when it's so clear where your refusal to change has led you (and continues to lead you). If you could walk through the prisons of America — the biggest prison system in the world by far — you would meet people who thought all they had to do was be "smoother" about their shhh, but who found out, after being sentenced to long years or their entire lives, that the only way to be smooth enough to avoid what you're facing is not to do it in the first place. When you tell us that going to jail "is nothin'," it's just another way of saying that you've accepted the fact that a significant part of your life will be lived under the control of others by your own choice. You can make that choice for yourself, as you have, but we hope that those reading your advice will see where it's led you, and make different choices in their own lives.

## Reality Check

Being here locked for my first time makes me believe that my whole future is messed up, man. Day after day, I hear echoes in my head saying, "You messed up, man." It's hard for me to get over the fact I messed, up but it is reality.

**-Que**

**From The Beat:** Yes, you messed up, but that doesn't mean you've messed up your whole future! You have lots of time to undo the mistake that led you here. Make a step-by-step plan how to move from here to where you'd like to be, and then follow it. The positive dreams you have for your future are still within your reach.

## My Advice

Yeah, man, this ya boy holding it down. Man, I been here for a long time and it's always a ninja that want to act all sick and hard. But these ninjas really babies, yo. These ninjas coming up in here for some weak-ass shhh cry like, "I been in here for too long!" Ninja, it's only been two weeks!

Man, these ninjas ain't shhh, yo. They don't see a real ninja like me cryin' bad time. Just do it and get it over with. My advice for the weak-ass ninjas is don't ride the crime line if you can't do the time.

I'm gone see you next week, ha.

**Terrance. T**

**From The Beat:** So, how much time are you willing to do without shedding any tears? Two weeks is long enough to be in this modern-slave situation, but how about two months? Two years? Two decades? When do you "real ninjas" start to see that your real lives are being controlled by others and that, whether you cry about it or not, doing the things that lead here gives power to others to judge you and control you. We don't think it matters what you think of the others in your situation. What's important is turning your attention to yourself and your own choices, and where they lead you.

## I Love Being Me

What's poppin' with The Beat? Tay Baby... you already know me straight that N.O. I miss my family so much. I'm ready to go crazy in this crazy-ass cell. Ms. Lady M in the building. Yeah, my baby named me.

I can't wait to get out of here. They got the boss locked up; they won't let Tay out. I got New Orleans on my mind like it's the only thing on my mind, ya dig? I miss my boo. I miss all my family and my two best friends (Jada and Savannah) in New Orleans. They real true friends. We be through it all, the ups and downs, the happiness, the falls.. I love y'all.

My other half (Muffin Baby), I love you big sis even though I'm other in my mind, ya dig. My partner in crime. We keep shhh live. Everybody know about the New Orleans girls. Our haters want to be like us 'cause we make shhh fun on most of these boring-ass days, feel me. What lil' Wayne said we said high on that shhh.

New Orleans, ya heard me! We come from the best. I love my mom and dad (Tyra and John) respect them. If you wanna grow old and raise y'all grandchildren, it's not no games. Recess been over.

RIP Ro-Ro you know you always missed a loved. Ronisha miss you the most, your baby girl. She love her daddy. April 7 is a messed up day for us. The day you died the more I cry. They don't make kind, smart men like you. I love you like you still here, like you never left. Them fake ass-boys, your so-called friends, is not the same. It seems like they had somehin' to do with it. You know your niece Tay gone to hold you down. It seems like they miss you the most when you go. Love you Roco. Mid-city misses you. I never forgot where I came from ya heard me. Love you. Rip Ro-Ro. Your mom go crazy for losing her child. Everybody misses and love you.

**-Ms. New Orleans**

**From The Beat:** We can see how much New Orleans is on your mind, as well as the others you've lost. We wish you'd tell us a little about your life here, though. You're not in jail for anything that happened in New Orleans, so it would help us to get a sense of who you are if you filled in some of the gaps about your life since leaving N.O. How about it?

## Thugs Need Love Too

What's good with The Beat, for real? You know this ninja, Chris. I just wanted to tell y'all about this girl I'm feeling at the schoolhouse. But I got locked up in this hole. And they just hit a ninja with a year at the Ranch. But I ain't trippin' because she said she was gone wait for me and write me and all the shhh.

I had hella girlfriends, but I never felt this way about any girl than I do her. But chea, I'ma hit y'all next week or something, a'ight. I'm out.

I'm out ! Boom

**-Chris**

**From The Beat:** You wrote that you "got locked up" as if there was no reason for it, as if you didn't give the system the power to take you from this girl you feel so much for. Until you focus your thoughts on your own responsibility for being here — and make some hard choices about changing your future — you'll just keep finding yourself surrounded only by boys and dreaming only of girls. Time to make a change or face the same consequences.

## Dreams Come True

Dreams come true Follow them Believe in you And only you can Make your dreams Come true

**-Low Dog**

**From The Beat:** We'd love to read more. For example, what are your dreams that only you can make come true? Gangsta Shhhh Gangstas shoot bang bang

## The Best Advice

The best advice I ever gave was to some of my little cousins 'bout all the things in the past, like doing drugs, smokin' weed, 'cause that stuff can mess up your life. But I did it 'cause I stress. But I told some kids to don't get locked up 'cause it's not the place to be. You lose your freedom, don't do nohting but follow rules and wear other ninja's drawe's. I told them to go to school and get college degree from playin' sports. But everybody want that little gangsta in 'em, so I say there's nothing I can do but tell you what to do.

-bloo

**The Beat Within:** There's something else you can do besides just giving this excellent advice; you can follow it! We learn by watching what others do, not what they tell us to do. So you can't expect your little cousins not to do drugs if you do them, for whatever reason. You can't expect them to take your advice to go to school and college if you're not in school with college as your goal. Let your advice be shown through your actions and not just your words.

## I Enjoy Drugs

Most of the time when I find myself having fun, I'm on some type of drug. It just seem like drugs brings out the best of people — or the worst — but I always seem to enjoy myself when I'm high, or rolling.

Not really a drinker, but when I do, it's not that much. Only time drugs affect me is when they will always affect me. But when they put me at a disadvantage is when I think it's too much, and that's not that often.

-Marky-D

**From The Beat:** Maybe you've just been lucky not to have been affected much by drugs. Or, maybe you can't see or judge the effect they're having on your brain, your lungs, and your body. Anyway, be careful, because sometimes the "disadvantage" a drug can put you at is too heavy to get out from under.

## To The Ranch

What's good with The Beat? This ya boy still in this thang. But yeah, ya boy is gone... Ay, dios mio... To that Ranch, ya dig... But feel me, I'ma ride it out (I think)...

Ain't nothing much to say fo' this weak-ass Beat!

To all the homies, keep ya head up!

-Ulala

**From The Beat:** If this is a "weak-ass Beat," it's only because we include some weak-ass writing... Ya dig?

## Skip's Broadcast: No 'Dro, No Drank

Yo yo yo! Beat. Skip here givin' it live and direct to ma lil' rowns. But yeah, me, I smoke, I drink. I'm supposed to stop but I can't! But the last time I think I had fun sober was when I went to Lucerne to see my grandparents. I was with my brothers and it was cool.

I had fun. I played basketball, went fishing, saw all kind of animals. It was cool. I wish I had more memorable sober moments to share, but unfortunately, my life now revolves around drugs, sex, and alcohol.

-Skippa

**From The Beat:** Didn't you forget one of the spokes in that life that revolves around drugs, sex and alcohol? We're talking about the short bursts of slavery that the drugs and alcohol lead you to. The one thing that truly worries us in this piece, Skip, is your statement that you can't stop. That's an admission of addiction, and addiction is a sickness that, like any sickness, needs attention and treatment. We're serious... You have far too much going for you to let it all slip away because you "can't stop" drinking or smoking (and especially drinking). This is not something you should ignore. All your brilliance and dreams for the future will come to nothing if you don't confront your drinking problem! (If you want to create more wonderful sober memories like those when you visited your grandparents, then you have to do things sober. It's as simple as that.)

## Fun Without Drugs

I never have fun when I'm sober because I'm never sober. I'm always on wipe me down. But you know, since I been here I been sober and it been boring as hell. So when I get out I'm go have to try to have fun without drugs.

-Poon Da God

**From The Beat:** We hope you're able to stay sober when you're free, because we think you can accomplish so much more with a clear mind. Plus, getting high or drunk so often leads to boring places like this!

## Skips Broadcast: Giving Advice

What's really good with the Beat? You know the broadcastin' king Skip givin' it raw and uncut to the square-ass square butts, ya dig?

But check this to the Editor: I'm getting' real heated 'cause I'm not seein' my pieces in The Beat. So my advice is to put my pieces in there please! (LOL)

But yeah, I think the best advice I gave to a person was a lil' mama I'm good friends with. She was stressin' over her parents and boyfriend. Her moms was bein' deceitful and her boyfriend was on some drug addict shhh. My advice was a simple two words: Don't trip! The reason I chose to say it because she had a lot of good stuff goin' for her. She's a young, attractive woman, and even though it's a lot of hard times for her, that's how life go. She can't keep her head down. Just don't trip off it. And if it don't got nothin' to do with you, I always say, "If it don't apply, let it fly."

-Skippa

**From The Beat:** (First, check out the spelling in the two words you misspelled: deceitful and friend. In both cases, they follow the rule, "I before E except after C...") We think you gave your friend very sound advice, and it's advice we could all benefit from. Finally, as to your complaint about not finding yourself in these pages, we went back to look at our last four issues — 13.37, 13.38, 13.39 and 13.40 — and found you in all of them, so cut us some slack!

## Best Advice

What's up with The Beat? This that Mac ninja wit' some real shhhh for ninjas. The best advice I ever gave was don't talk that shhh if you ain't 'bout that shhh, feel me. It's some ninjas who talk big shhhh that they can't get out of. But ninjas gone do what they do All I'm sayin' is if you talk that shhh, then be able to back that shhh up, ya dig!

For all my real ninjas who down in the feds and who really finna do some real time, keep ya heads up and ya eyes open 'cause it's real snakes in the grass, ya dig!

-Mac

**From The Beat:** This sounds like advice you can give when you're locked up (along with those you're trying to advise). But why would someone take advice from someone else who's a prisoner just like them? What's the best advice you ever gave to a free person when you, too, were a free person?

## Forgive Me

Everything I did to hurt you, forgive me. And it didn't just hurt you, it hurt me too. I really didn't mean what I did, and I wish I could take it back. I guess I was just searching for love, but I see I found it.

I wish I could take everything back that I did to hurt you, but I can't so I'ma put it behind me and put you in front of me. So now would you take me in your arms and love me forever?

-Donny

**From The Beat:** We don't know what you did that you're so ashamed and remorseful about, but we hope your apology goes a long way towards healing the hurt.

## Family And Friends

I miss my family very much. It's like the devil taking me for a night in hell. But I know god is with me to the end. My family, and especially my lovely mother, also loves me and always by my side every time I need them. Every time I go to court, my mom is always behind me 24/7 every single court day. And also my brothers and my sisters. I love them with all my heart.

**-Fat Pak**

**From The Beat:** We believe you when you say you love them, but you have to put some action behind those words. How many more times can you put your mom and siblings through the pain they feel when you're gone and still insist that you love them with all your heart? Real love requires sacrifices, so maybe it's time for you to start making some sacrifices just as your mom has made so many for you!

## What's A Ninja to Do

I tried school when I was young. That shhh did not work.

So every day after that, I went to school for the girls and to flirt

in the back of the school, telling them to lift up they skirt.

And after school with the ninjas doing dirt, smoking weed, selling work.

I realized I had to get on my shhh, it won't hurt to get money in every direction and rep the turf.

I be on my block, shhh hot.

Always run from the cops, shhh won't stop

I will never quit...

Knock a few ninjas down in they jets then keep it lit.

Ain't nohtin' wrong with being with the shhh

So what's a ninja to do when they try to stop you, lock you, or pop you

'cause they either want to see you in jail or n a box, dude.

So watch for them ninjas and the cops, dude s

Say on yo' shhh, that what a ninja to do

Then they can't stop you, lock you or pop you.

**-Sargent B**

**From The Beat:** There's only one problem with your advice... it comes from someone who is stopped, who is locked, and who is popped! In your situation, you're giving advice about "they can't stop you!" What nonsense. They can stop you, and they will, if you don't stop yourself first. When you're free — and have managed to stay free for at least one year — then you can give advice that we credit because it will have something behind it besides wishful thinking...

## It's Funny To Me

Man, wha's up with The Beat?

Public announcement for the people showcasin' fo' the media. Yeah, that's right, but let's talk about publicity stunts. Now these clown artist, they not "crazy". LOL. Ha ha, fo' real, fo' real, they false, but they flip the script and say it wasn't them, it was that person that is false or whatever the case is, ya dig.

Yeah, I know y'all do, but round back to the topic that's relevant at hand. Anyway, stop that. Ya only hurtin' ya'self. But don't get me wrong, you can hurt me and others by doin' what cha doin', and I know you understand that we can't do nothin' 'cause you got the upper hand.

One statement, one man, one stand, stop the anamanical sum.

**-E-Boy**

**From The Beat:** We have no idea what you're talking about in that last line, but we're taking a chance and leaving it in anyway. In fact, we're not at all sure what you're trying to say in this piece. Could you spell it out for us in simpler sentences?

## Sayin' Anything

D is my roommate

We is in the zone

Wish I had patron to be on

I really don't need it

But I gotta feed it

When I say "it"

I mean the urge to be out my mind

But I'm so behind in my time

It's crucial

T to my left — oops — I mean my right

H to my left!

D, J, PT Cruiser, and G

Straight forward

Man, this situation I'm in is really above my head

Got time for not making my bed

Nah, that was Ellen DeGeneres

It's hideous in the halls

But gotta do the time I did the crime

So shhh

I should've stayed outta the malls!

Aye, Donny: the wheels on the bus go all through the City

From the richest to the gritty

**-Rikk The Rula**

**From The Beat:** We had to take out a line or two of this poem (we don't let you put your set in The Beat, even when you try to get over on us...), but the heart of this piece is in the line: "It's hideous in the halls." We agree, so why would you put yourself here? If stating out of the malls keeps you free, then that's what you should do. What else would you need to change to stay free?

## Sober Fun

I go to the movies. I went to Vegas and Santa Cruz without getting high I can go with other people and have fun without getting.

**-Anthony**

**From The Beat:** Come on Anthony. We know you can write more than this little bit. You could have told us what you did in Vegas and Santa Cruz, or what consequences you usually face when you have "fun" while drunk or stoned. Give us more than just two sentences!

## Don't Play

Man, yeah, I'm talking about how is it that cats are so sick that they all scared. I mean before you try to beef, I suggest you get protection. Man, it's simple... hustle hard and get your dough up like the rest of them guys. And it you do, man, just remember if you thinking that they ain't in the gate don't play.

**-Yns**

**From The Beat:** We had to take out the last line as not appropriate. But tell us, why would anyone take advice about "beef" from someone who has lost control of his life by giving up his freedom to this cold system?

## Just Tryna Go Home

I really don't know what to write about because my mind ain't really been thinking straight. I'm really ready to just go home, but it seem like the judge tryna play me. But at the same time, she tryna help. I just don't know why it's taking so long, but at least I know I'm going home. It's good. I'ma just get out and do something positive so I don't have to come back.

**-B.A**

**From The Beat:** We particularly like the end of this piece where you commit to doing "something positive" when you get out. That's the attitude that will keep you free. But what specific things do you have in mind when you say "something positive?"



## This Life

Gangstas sell cream, yaddadimean  
Gangstas rob people  
Then they flip it twice an' double up  
How gangstas are, gangsta enough to change  
Or gangsta enough to be the same

As every other gangsta in this game -Low Dog From The Beat: We can tell from each of the three short pieces you gave us that you have skills as a poet and writer. Now we want to see those skills expressed in a longer piece on a single topic. Next time...

Stop Jail It's your boy Tweezy out here in these streets. You got to be careful. You never know who's going to come around that block and knock your shhh backwards. So what I'm tryin' to say is be careful.

**-Tweezy**

**From The Beat:** We wish you had ended this piece with the advice to "be careful," but you didn't. You went on to give your idea of advice about what it means to be "a real ninja." We took out all that advice since it can only put the next young man in the same place you're writing it!

## Slowing Down

I wanna just put a few lines in The Beat. That's all I got. But shhh, what's good with The Beat? Me, chillin', steady training kids, feel me. Tired of being around these silly lil' dudes, though. I need to hurry and make my grand entrance to the streets.

Females missing me out there. I love my ninjas, man. They can't bring the killa down though. I done done it all. Stop playing wit' me, Betta lace up that game. Deep down, everybody know how I move. Bounce out boy, lil' daddy chasing down like the J-team.

You dudes want me to slow down. That's just what I'ma do. I'ma lay off. You ninjas welcome. RIP fallen soldiers.

**-ER**

**From The Beat:** We're not sure exactly what you're trying to say here. How can you both make your "grand entrance to the streets" and "slow down" and "lay off"? What do you plan to lay off doing? What do you plan to slow down? Where do you plan to be a year from now and how will you get there?

## It Ain't Easy

It ain't easy knowing that my cousin is also locked up. It ain't easy knowing that he is in the same situation as me, and probably even worse. We both wasting time doing what other people other than our parents telling us what to do.

It just ain't easy, but all we could do is keep our heads up and live day after day, and don't let nobody bring you down. And don't even trip, Beat. My cousin is in the pen.

**-Reynaldo**

**From The Beat:** No, it's not easy at all. But when you say there's nothing you can do about it, that's not true. You can start listening to your parents and doing what they ask, since they have your best interest at heart. We're sorry about your cousin, and hope you don't make the same mistakes he made since you know where those mistakes lead.

## I Stay High

I smoke fat 'dro to get my brains high, ya dig. Most of the time I be trippin', but when I come down from my high, I don't feel right, but when I'm high I feel regular. That's all fo' today.

**-D Boii**

**From The Beat:** Is this the longest time you've gone without being high? Why not build on this sober foundation?

## The Best Time Ever

What's crackin' with The Beat? Man, I had fun not smokin' at my little niece' party. Without smokin' with all my family, we had hella fun. We played the PS3 and ate a lot of food and cake and ice cream.

One of my homies had a girlfriend that was tryin' to set him up. I told him to break up with her, and he took my advice. The next day I came to JJC, so it was good to have fun with the family before I came in to JJC.

**-Joshua**

**From The Beat:** We can understand why you would savor this last bit of fun (and sober, too!) with your family before you had to give it all up for this place. But that only makes us want to know why you would risk all that by doing whatever it was that led you here. Do you plan any changes when you get out so that you won't have to come back, and you can have a lot more fun with your family?

## I Miss My Lil' Brother

Damn! Ever since I been locked up I miss you little Bra. Damn, you the only lil' ninja that's been there. It's messed up not seeing you, an' shhh, 'cause I'm so used to taking you everywhere with me.

I get mad when dad tells me you being bad. I feel like escaping and beating yo' little ass. But damn, lil' bra, I miss you. I love ya boy.

**-Unknown**

**From The Beat:** If you're missing him, imagine how much he is missing you. That's the problem with doing the things that let the system take you from your family... it hurts them, too. Why do you think giving him a beating would make him change his behavior? Did you ever get your ass beat? Did it stop you from coming here?

## A.S.A.P

Chea man, what's good with The Beat? I'm down right now, ya heard. They can take our freedom for the moment, but it ain't forever. What's good? I'm keeping my head up, ya heard.

I'm gon be back in three months or less, ya dig. Ninjas writin' statements on ya dog, mayne. For what reason? I don't know why, but guess what? They can't stop me 'cause mayne, that statement all false like. Ya heard me, mayne.

But look, I put it like this... God put me in here for a reason. He work in mysterious ways, but it works out for the better. You can catch me in that black sweater; no one can do it better.

**-M.I**

**From The Beat:** We have to make two important points. The first is this: if you give the system a reason, it can most definitely hold you forever. More than 2,000 children are serving Life Without Parole in state prisons! The second is: you can't fool God. If you believe in God, then you must also believe that respecting all of His creation is rewarded, while disrespecting it is not. It's your deeds that get judged, not your words...

## My Number One Priority

My number one priority is getting off of probation and go home with my family and live happily. The problem is I keep getting locked up.

When I'm locked up, I always say I'm going to do good and get out of probation, but I always end up back to the hall. So this time without saying my number one priority is getting out of probation, this time I'm just going to do it.

**-Lil' T**

**From The Beat:** We hope that "this time" is the right time, because each time you come back to this place it makes it easier for the system to hold you again. What specific things do you plan to change in order to make this your last trip to the hall?

## No Drugs, But A Stolo

The time I had fun without using drugs or alcohol was when me and my friends were walking on one beautiful day. We just happened to see a van that we happened to like, so we decided to hop in and take it for a spin around the Bay. We went driving all night long, picking up girls in San Francisco.

-B

**From The Beat:** So you stole someone's van so that you and your boys could have fun? That means your fun came at the expense of someone else's hard work. That's the selfishness of childhood. We hope, now that you are living with the consequences of your own choices (if not this one, then others) that you give some thought to what it means to be a man...

## My Girl's Enough

The last time I was having fun without using drugs or alcohol was when I was with my baby's mama. We were hanging out at her house when she told me, "Let's go lay down in the room." So we got up and went to go lay down in the room. We went in the room and the candles were lit. We laid on the bed and had the most fun of our lives.

-Lil' G

**From The Beat:** Thank you for sparing us the x-rated details of your night of fun. It's nice to know that all you needed was some candles and each other, and nothing to drink, smoke or pop.

## Having Fun

My friends and I went camping four hours away from San Jose. I forgot the (name of the place) we stayed at, but we went camping. It took three hours to fix the tent and while we were fixing it a branch fell on my head. It hurt a lot but I started laughing. The next day we went hiking, it was fun.

-A

**From The Beat:** Was that the first time you'd been camping and hiking? Maybe when you get out you can find out how to get involved with people who do those sort of things like the Y.M.C.A or the local BOYS CLUB. Nice piece. If you engage in more positive activities then you won't have time to get into any trouble.

## No Girl Better Than Mine

There's no girl in this world better than mine  
If we were going for looks, I'll be ugly and you'll fine  
If we were coins, I'll be a nickel and you a dime  
If I were to tell you I didn't love, you I'll be lying  
If you were to tell me you don't love me, I'll be crying  
There's no girl in this world better than mine

-Lil' Blacky

**From The Beat:** Nice poem! For the next time, can you write about a poem about your life or about how you view life itself? We would appreciate that more.

## Having Fun

The last time I had fun without drugs/alcohol was in mid July of 2008. I went white water rafting with a program called SMASH (Summer Math And Science Honors).

It was fun going through the rapid river in Sacramento where the gold rush occurred. We also got to see machines digging for gold and we got to swim and rescue people falling from the boats.

-Tryillo

**From The Beat:** Damn, that sounds like a good place to go. To back we don't know how to get there, or else, we would take our car and go there for weeks. It is really fun to swim and to explore different things we don't see in the city.

## Having Fun Drunk

I can't remember the last time I really have fun without taking any alcohol or without smoking weed, but I do remember having a great time drunk as shhh. It was Bacardi lemon I drank a whole Gatorade bottle with no chaser. The room kept spinning and I kept drinking. Sounds fun huh? It was fun as it gets.

-Pinky

**From The Beat:** We didn't ask to write about a having fun while being drunk. It doesn't sound fun! Sounds sick, yuck!

## I Didn't Do Drugs

What's up Beat? What's cracking? Well today I'll be talking about drugs.

Well this time that I was out, I did not do any drugs. I didn't do any drugs because I was only out less than a week. But the other time I was out, I did all type of drugs.

-Boo

**From The Beat:** How will it be the next time you get out? Are you going to do drugs? If we were you, we would use this time that you've been clean to never use again. Your body doesn't need it anymore. Stay focus!

## Violence All Around Me

It's tight that we recognize someone influential like Tupac Shakur. All of my life, I grew up around drugs, violence, and racism. I have seen some of my best friends die in front of me. I have seen more than half of my homies go to jail or the pen. Some are doing life or a couple years like my brother. Oh ya, free my brother! Finally R.I.P to Tupac Amari Shakur the realest ninja I have heard of and a mentor, and an influential person to my life, and to the homies in Juvi. Stay up.

-Young Ralph

**From The Beat:** Now you see what happens as a result of violence, drugs, and institutional prejudice...what will you about it? Also, we aren't able to print R.I.P's unless you dedicate a whole piece to the person you're sending it to...

## Calling Me

I live a life  
Tangled up like dark clouds  
People seem to talk stuff  
But they seem to only bark loud.  
I think of a day  
Where I'll come across a killa  
Still I keep a weapon by my side for that day  
That I have to fight that killa in the mirra.  
Cause my mama asked if I still bang  
And I lie and tell her no,  
But her heart knows, I ain't changed.  
I hug her tightly as I leave  
It bothers me  
But for now I got to go  
Cause the street is calling me.  
My mama prays that I quit the life I live.  
But I can't cause I'm a soldier.  
Got to put in work and let these rivals know they can't get over.

-Taz

**From The Beat:** You wrote, "That I have to fight that killa in the mirra." We know that you mean you want to fight your enemy, but we can also read it as you fighting yourself (that killer in the mirror). You say you are a soldier, but a soldier protects and defends a country and whole group of innocent people. May we ask who exactly are you protecting and defending? You're actually hurting innocent people, which soldiers are not supposed to do...like your mother.

## This Life

Man what's cracking beat. This ya boy Young Smircish. My opinion on life is what you make of it. Life ain't perfect but you gotta keep yo head up when times get hard. Stuff happens sometimes and it might not make sense but you gotta choose your battles and do what you gotta do to survive.

People don't understand why we do the things we do. It ain't easy growing up with no father figure and the only people you have to look up to is the OG's and the gangs. I didn't look at them as bad people. I looked at them as role models.

**-Young Smircish**

**From The Beat:** Do you feel that if you would have had a father figure that your life would have followed a different path than the path you are on now?

## I've Seen You Once Upon A Dream

I've seen you once upon a dream,  
Your smile so precious,  
The likes of which I've never seen,  
The touch of your lips, leave me gasping for air,  
Getting lost in your eyes, the fruity scent of your hair,  
God sent me a blessing, an angel from the sky,  
The joy you bring into my life,  
Everyday you're by my side,  
Though you've been hurt, I'll tell you now  
Our love will stay for real,  
For as time goes on, and on and on,  
Your broken heart I'll heal,  
I've seen you once upon a dream,  
The things in life all have no means,  
For the only thing I want is you,  
To have a love so pure and true,  
Your voice so harmonic and oh so sweet,  
Every time I hear it, it sweeps me off my feet,  
I've seen you once upon a dream,  
Your love is all I'll ever need,  
Each day our love grows more and more,  
Let the heavens know how high it soars,  
I've seen you once upon a dream...  
As me for you and you for me...

**-Bebo**

**From The Beat:** Where do you stand with this special person? Have you share this poem with that special person? You should!

## Group Home

What's cracking, this is David just chillin'.

Well, I'm back. I was out for 5 months staying up in that sunny city, you know, but anyway, I'm a 17-year-old and they are trying to put me in a group home 'cause I've done every other program. They're tired of seeing me up in court. They only got me for failing E.M.P. and they're trying to give me 9-12 months. What the... are you kidding me?

Well, ay check this out, I was going to high school up in Sunnyvale and I had no problems there, but they kicked me out cause I'm in here. They don't want to let me back in when I get out.

**-David**

**From The Beat:** Getting kicked out of school is definitely something to be concerned about. What's your plan? Are you going to try to get your G.E.D. or get enrolled in another school? You've got a whole lot of complaints about everyone trying to keep you down, but don't forget that YOU are the one that ultimately decides whether you're going to stay in the system and stay down, or else get smart and figure out a plan that doesn't land you in jail. Getting your diploma or G.E.D. is probably the first step.

## Hopefully...

What's up Beat it's me, Creeper, once again.

Well there is something I always wanted to do, I always wanted to do good, finish high school, go to college and get an education but when I was in middle school I started messing up I started getting locked up.

Hopefully when I get out I start doing the right thing so later in future I could have a good job, a wife and some kids and I hope not to end up in county.

**-Creeper**

**From The Beat:** It's going to take more than just hope, right? It's going to take a real plan. So what is your plan? Because the sooner you start doing the right thing, the sooner you can leave the pain of the system behind you...

## Mama Love

Dedicated to my mama  
who's put up with my drama  
the one who's never left  
who held me when I wept  
I crept  
upon my enemies  
slipping in the streets  
busted lip, now I bleed  
a healing kiss laid on me  
hush child cry no more  
pretty soon there will be no war  
pacify me into slumber  
cradle me my loving mother  
it's clear we need each other  
protection from the thunder  
clouds  
which always stay  
shedding blood and tears for rain  
mama please believe I try  
within I want to cry  
but all my tears are dry  
from living a screwed up life  
your son has realized  
how much you wipe your eyes  
deep within my soul  
little did I know  
mama let's go  
I cannot do this on my own.

**-Piglit**

**From The Beat:** How and why do you continue on a path, knowing how much pain you put your mother through? Sounds like you feel bad about some of your choices, yet you continued. Is it too late?

## Walmart

In our class we watched this movie called The High Cost of Low Price.

It was about all the corruption about Walmart, from the sweat shops in China, to the greed of the people who own and run Walmart, to the mistreatment of their regular employees ...and the list keeps going. They are trying to convince people not to shop there, but Walmart got prices that's making unaffordable items affordable.

So I don't discourage people to shop there. I think the focus should be on trying to get the workers better wages and benefits and get the ones in the top give back, 'cause they have billions and don't give.

**-Film Critic**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for sharing your learnings with The Beat and Beat readers. Do you think, altogether, that it was an interesting and balanced documentary? If you were the one making the movie, what would you have added or done differently?



## Hand Ball

What's good Beat? Before I came to the halls I never played handball, but since then my boy's been teaching me the game and the techniques to be raw. He always stays on the court 'cause he wins, so I figure I learn from the best, feel me? I'm gonna keep practicing my game out there and by the time I leave I'll be smashing, and I'll bring handball back to Palo Alto

**-Future Handball Champ**

**From The Beat:** We hope your handball skills continue to improve! Give us an update, and don't forget to sign your name next time so you can get credit!

## Growing My Hair For Now

Well Beat, it's the one and only Shankz, leaning posted up. I'm finally growing out my hair and it's my first time. It's been nine months and God dizzy man I'm gonna cut it, 'cause soon I will be working.

I've been behind these walls for 11 months. I wanted to see how it would look, and it's sick, but it takes a long time to comb it and take care of it. But other than that I'm still holding it down.

**-Shankz**

**From The Beat:** At least now you can say that you have done it and we agree that if its to get a job you have to do what you have to do and cut it if you feel that it will make you look more presentable.

## Back At The Hall

Hey, what's up, Beat? What's cracking? Well, with me, not much, I just wanted to let all my friends know that I'm back at the Hall. I was at the ranch, but I got failed from there, so they brought me back to the Hall and here it's the same shh every day. Nothing has changed. Well, Beat, all I want to say to all my friends is to stay up and don't let no one get you down.

**-Lil' One**

**From The Beat:** We don't know how much time you have left in the Hall, but it sounds like you haven't made much of the time you've spent here up to this point. You can't really expect the situation to change unless you yourself try to make some changes, like reevaluating the decisions you've made, making plans for how to stay out of the system once you're on the outs, etc. What have you got to show for all the time you've spent locked up?

## To Myself

The best advice that I ever gave was to myself because I made a choice to either start going to school or to quit and I chose to go to school. I made that advice to myself because I wanted to get smart.

**-Antonio**

**From The Beat:** But, if you made that choice, what are you doing here? You don't want to graduate from here. Do you?

## Vegas Vacation

What I have never done and would like to do is go to Las Vegas, because I never been there before and I would like to go someday.

I want to go cause I hear it's a good place to have a vacation at. I don't really get to go places but someday I hope I go. If I ever get to go I'll be the happiest person alive.

**-Mark**

**From The Beat:** You deserve trips and travel and vacations and all the things that come from having freedom and a good job. If you ever get to Vegas, be sure to send a postcard to The Beat so we know you got there!

## My Life

What's up wit it Beat? It's that homeboy Oso, straight out of San Jose from the Santa Clara Juvenile Hall, just kicking it, trying to figure out what to write about...Aight, I just thought of something. I'm gonna talk about the life that I been living,

I live that Chicano gangsta life, and my life is a dice game. Every time I step out my front door and return back at night I thank the Lord for letting me live another day. I'm a youngster live in San Jose, and I get messed with a lot by 5-0, always getting stopped and shhh. But I'm used to it now but when I step out my door and leave to go and kick it with the homeboys at the park. My mom prays that I come back home alright and that she don't get that phone call.

To me making it home from my hood and leaving my house is a blessing because I live in a rival gang neighborhood but I'm always ready for when they try to run up on me. But "I won't be taken out the game."

Anyways I've been down my whole life and don't intend to stop until I'm 6 feet deep because I will always be a homeboy. But, until I write back to The Beat.

I'll like to say rest in peace to my primo who I lost and my homeboy that was shot. Only two but way to many lost. Late

**-Oso**

**From The Beat:** We'd love to see more of your songs, even though we did not print the lyrics you included, because we found it inappropriate, yet you obviously got real talent with words, and true heart as well. You seem to think you've chosen the right path too - but then at the end you tell us about your cousin who died, your friend who was shot. And you describe a life of fear, police harassment, and the loss of your number one human right: Freedom. Is there a way to be loyal and true to what you believe in without putting yourself and your conscience in such jeopardy?

## Something I've Never Done

I never got off probation! I've been on it since I was twelve, now I'm eighteen in two months. I regret how much time I spend here... It sucks, but I guess that's life when you don't think before you do.

I wish I could change some things in the past, but it's like that Tupac song "Life Goes On." I hope I do good when I get out because I got a kid on the way, so hopefully that keeps me doing good, well wish me luck, Beat. I'm out and stay up!

**-Jensen**

**From The Beat:** Six years is a long time to be in the system, but like you say, you can't change the past. You can make sure that your future is different, however. Pst, here's the secret: hoping just isn't enough. Don't just "hope" you don't get into trouble again when you get out, MAKE SURE you don't. It's your decision whether or not to continue the life you've been living up to this point. If you're really going to step up and be a good influence on your child's life, it's time to be a man and learn what it means to act responsibly.

## Travel To See The Girls

Well what's up Beat, it's your boy Kane once again just in this boring place chilling. Well I'm gonna write about something I've never done.

I haven't done a lot of things but when I get out I'm gonna try to do hella shhh, like go to Brazil, Florida or Cuba. I wanna go to these places for the girls. I wanna meet lots of pretty girls and party with them.

To all much love and respect.

**-Kane**

**From The Beat:** If we could offer and advise it would be to learn the culture before you go and learn of their traditions and customs. Based on that find the fit that you feel you would enjoy most. You'll find a party anywhere, but the trick is to go somewhere that you'll enjoy more than just the parties.

## Different Story

An outsider, not getting in people's way, I'm the one that will most likely want to be around to help, instead of causing trouble.

Living a life to please others instead of helping myself. It hurts to talk about the things you have dealt with because you don't like to remember.

When I try to talk about problems, I don't know how to open up. Happiness is only a step away. These walls got me thinking, but I don't know who to go to. No one is out to get me, I'm out to get myself.

Once I'm out, I'm gonna open up to the world on who I really am. A different kind of story I'll tell, something the people haven't heard.

**-Izzy**

**From The Beat:** This is a really honest piece. It shows that you're extremely self-aware; most people aren't as capable of "seeing themselves" as you are. Self-awareness is the first big step towards self-improvement. We hope you make good on this promise to yourself to start opening up to people when you get out, since it sounds like you're ready to stop being the outsider.

## Never Met My Dad

What's up beat? Well sometimes I never done was meet my dad. I wish I met that foo' and I still plan on doing it one of these days.... if he ever gets out of prison or if I ever go to prison.

I hope I could get a chance to hang out with him as a friend and just spend some time with him and his family. But if I never ever get a chance to meet him I won't trip, it's not like I know the dude. Well I'm just gonna make this one short and hope to see this foo'. Well I'm out till next time.

**-M**

**From The Beat:** Do you know what prison he's in? Maybe you could write him a letter (if you haven't already). Have you seen pictures of him? What do people in your family think of him? Do they say you are similar, or different?

## Some Thing You've Never Done

One thing I never got the chance to do that I really wanted to is invest in stocks. A lot of people never think about their future. I don't wanna work the rest of my life, and anybody can do it. Look into it, mutual funds is good. It's not hard we all need to learn how to have money work for you ...not work for money.

**-Angel**

**From The Beat:** If this is how your mind works, then you should definitely go to college or and maybe even get a Masters in Business Administration, or economics. Because you could make a lot of money advising people on the stock market, since so many of us don't understand it very well!

## College and A Career

What's good Beat? Well one thing I'm trying to do in the future after I graduate. I want to go to a college and continue my football career. I've been playing for 3 years and found out I'm pretty good.

After that I want to become a firefighter for either the city of San Jose, or the city of Santa Clara. The reason for those cities I've lived in. I'm kind of scared that my record will affect my dream, though hopefully not though.

Well Beat, until next time....late!

**-Simon**

**From The Beat:** Talk to your PO and get help, because from what we know, your past mistakes shouldn't get in the way of you following your dreams, so long as you are honest in your applications. In some places, there are even scholarships for young people who've had trouble with the law in the past.

## I Was Doing Well

I was doing really good, so I could make my family proud. I was doing pretty good you know. I finally got into school, I stop smoking marijuana since October 20, 2006 and I got myself to do good a lot. My mom and dad know that I have changed a lot. I'm not like before. I changed for me and my family, and especially my mom and my dad. I love them more than anything in this world.

The best advice I ever gave was talk to my little brother and his friends. It was to stay away from drugs and gangs. You may think it's cool or something, but really it ain't. It's not the right thing to look forward to, it's wrong. Just stay in school, graduate and make my family proud and especially mom and dad. They deserve it, and they wanna see their kids succeed.

**-Denny**

**From The Beat:** By being here, you're not proving that you've changed. It's time to prove it. If you were doing well, what made you come back? From your writing, it seems like you've changed a lot, but the problem is that you haven't put in action your words. Follow your own advice and your heart!

## It Messes you Up

What's cracking Beat, this is Richy from Gilroy. Today's topic is on the best advice I ever gave. I think the best advice was when one of my homies wanted to smoke tweak. I told him don't mess with that shhh because that shhh will screw you up.

He said that's alright then he said I won't do it. The best advice is to not do yola. The reason I didn't want to do yola was because I heard that it messes you up and it will make you all pale. I did take my own advice because I never tried it because that shhh is nasty.

It hasn't got me hooked like most of the other people that I know. The advice did me really good and it has not got me stealing from my family or breaking into houses and getting money to buy coke or any nasty stuff like that.

**-Richy**

**From The Beat:** That was definitely good advice on both you guys' part. You mentioned: "It hasn't got me hooked like most of the other people that I know." Have you tried it before and if so what made /compelled you to stop? They say to: "just say no!" Is it that easy?

## Leave All This Behind

I give my sister advice when she goes out and has fun with her homies. I tell her not to do bad things that might get her in Juvenile. She's only 13, but she don't listen. I even tell her not to be like me: messing up.

And my little brother that is only 5 years old, he does bad things, I think he's getting that from me too. I don't want them both to be in my shoes because what I'm doing is not good.

Like I've got goals, I'm a graduate and go to college, be a doctor, and leave all this behind. Like if nothing had happened. And start all over with a new life.

I'm going to be a good model for my little brother and sis. I want to show my parents I could change. And I won't let them suffer like they are doing right now. But when I get out I'm a be different and show my bro and sis good examples. Not to be in a gang. I love them a lot and my mom and dad.

**-Stephanie**

**From The Beat:** We think it's great that you've got such high goals. The way to achieve them is one step at a time. For example, step one: stay out of the thug life. Step two: study hard. Step three: get your GED or graduate. You get the idea. It's all about focus, and keeping your dreams in mind always, at all times. We think you can do it.

## The Streets Keep Calling Me

What's up!! It's that homegirl Nena getting at all you homies living the notorious life. Well I hope everybody is cool, living life to the fullest extent. Well, I ain't feeling these subjects so I'm going to let you know how I'm feeling.

Tomorrow I have court. I know I'm not going home cause I'm on trial. My mom just visited me and told me my older brother is locked up for the same case as mine, but that fool is in county jail so I don't know.

Lately I've been thinking about smoking bomb, chilling at Subway where I worked. But at the same time thinking on how to study for my GED test. While I'm here I'm trying to get my GED, but I don't get much help cause I'm a S.R. and I stay in the classroom and the teacher don't really help me, so that's when I zone out and don't pay attention to my work.

It's hard for me to work cause I never really went to school so I don't know what to do...Pero, yeah, the family's been on my mind a lot. Especially my niece, Andrea. She's my world. I even got her name tattooed on my neck. I miss her a lot.

Damn Beat, I'm honestly tired of all the b.s. I'm hella stressing out, I just feel like popping a pill and closing my gangsta eyes and never opening them. I try to maintain, but it's like the devil is always around me bringing me down. And damn, I always dream that the streets keep calling me. When I dream I feel like I'm always there, then I wake up to homegirls and the staff being hella loud. But for now, I'm out.

**-Nena**

**From The Beat:** It's not easy to escape the traps that got you in here in the first place. As you say, if you've never really been in school, you don't know quite what to do. That's what life is all about, however: you've got to learn as you go along. You say the streets keep calling you, but at the same time you talk about trying to get your GED, so it seems like you must want something better than this gangsta life. And surely you don't want your niece to end up where you are? Well, there's no better way to prevent that than to lead by example. Show her that there are better options out there than getting locked up. We can't print a list of RIPs. Write a whole piece as a tribute to one of them if you like.

## About Graffiti

I'm going to be talking about Graffiti. Graffiti is not just about writing on walls and doing damage to the community. It's also about getting your name known and being seen. It's also almost like getting famous and being seen.

Some people say it's vandalism, I agree to that too, because it does take a lot of money to take off. Some people think it's art and that's what I think it is, too. That's what I think about graffiti and I don't care what people think.

**-Martin**

**From The Beat:** Who are some of your favorite graffiti artists? We agree, there are some people who just throw up words on the cement, and others who show true inspiration and talent. Will you draw something for The Beat?

## Having Clean Fun

The last time I had clean fun was with my lady. We were at the park sitting under the trees just posted telling jokes and laughing. Then we went to my house in my room watched a movie and took a nap.

**-Andrew**

**From The Beat:** That sounds like something you can do more often than that way you won't get in trouble. Ain't nothing like chilling with your girl and just kicking back relaxing. Are you still with her?

## Two Pitbulls

Q-onda Beat. Well I hope all you guys are doing cool. As for me, I'm not going that good. The reason why is because I went to James Ranch and I got failed because I didn't want to talk with my rival gang members.

I saw my PO and he wants to send me to YA Preston because I got failed from the ranch. Damn I don't even know what to do anymore. I feel stuck because I been getting locked up since I was a very young teen. Now I'm 16 and I might be locked up until I become an adult... but I ain't tripping you know... because I knew what I was getting myself into.

I look as life like walking two pit bulls the one you feed the most is the one who becomes the strongest. if I feed my evil ways more I'm going to become more evil and more nefarious. Well I got court soon, and they going to tell me if I'm getting YA or not. I'm going to hope for the best and plan for the worst.

**-Angel**

**From The Beat:** Wow, that's pretty deep - if that's true, then which pit-bull are you feeding by refusing the programs that could help you? It seems like you don't want to feed the evil ways, right? What would you like to feed, and how do you intend to do it?

## Hot Day

Me and my girl were chilling at her pad and it was pretty cool. It was a hot day too, so we went swimming. We had a lot of fun. Then we got out and dried off. Went back to her pad, ate, and crashed out. That was the day I remember that we had a lot of fun without drinking and smoking. The End.

**-Chilling**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like a nice, lazy summer day. Do you think you were able to enjoy it more because you weren't under the influence?

## Hello!

Dang I be hella bored up in this unit I feel like I'm gonna go crazy especially if I refuse my psyche medication. But in order for me to get out on house arrest I gotta pop my pills you know what I mean jelly bean.

Yeah but I gots to bounce like Tigger so catch you guys on the rebound. Bye thanks.

**-Athina**

**From The Beat:** Why not take your meds if they help you not feel crazy? Meds can have a positive effect on people's lives sometimes, making it so you don't have to struggle as hard.

## Back Again

What's up Beat? This is Love here yet again, and this time it's been a crazy ride. I'm 18 so they took me to Elmwood for 5 days and then they brought me to the Hall once I finished my adult charges, and now I'm at the end of my Juvenile Hall journey.

I don't cry, when I sit in my cell at night though, I think back to when my family used to try and scare me with jail and prison, and now I've been to Elmwood and it ain't that scary.

My next court date is on October 8th, so I hope everything goes good and I'm off Juvenile Probation. Thanks.

**-Love**

**From The Beat:** Do you think the only reason your family tried to "scare" you with prison was because they thought it was a terrifying place? Or do you think maybe they wanted better for you than to spend your days locked up, never seeing the sun, away from them and everyone you love? What about you? Do you have dreams of something better?



## My Destiny

What's crackin' wit' the beat. This is Elmo from Watsonville, chillin' in the hall again. Well Beat I left to a placement in Tulare County. I got terminated because some guy tried to cross out my hood, and I let him have it.

I don't regret it though. There were some other homeboys that had my back. If anyone is going to the placement called Courage to Change I suggest you kind of change your mentality and just try to really have the courage to change because if you don't they'll come down hard on you. There's hella programs to help you out though, they got I.L.P. [Individual Living Program], N.A. meetings, gang intervention and D.M.V. [Department Of Motorvehicles] to help you get your license, and to pass your test.

I was just hardheaded and couldn't do it. The program is easy you just have to follow their guidelines. I think my destiny is to continue my lifestyle. One love, keep your game tight. I'll keep mine. Much love to you.

-Elmo

**From The Beat:** It sounds like there were things you really liked about this placement. If you had the chance to go back, would you? As for your destiny - do you ever wonder if you might have another one? Like to be a father? A husband? An athlete? A successful businessman? A writer?

## Pursue, This Is My Life

My purpose in life is to pursue and strive, Even through the struggles, this is my life, The clock starts ticking when I open my eyes I'm tryin' my best while I'm goin' through hard times, But hold on tight, I'ma keep my head up high, It was a beautiful day, so let it be tonight, The only motivation is my family by my side, There are no feelin' of sensation, so I'ma say good night, Just think twice before action, this isn't my good-bye. Being locked up isn't satisfaction, but this is my life

-Saetern

**From The Beat:** Of course this isn't your good-bye. This is just a temporary stop on a long journey, which could go in so many different directions. "Your life" is at the starting gate, not the finish, and you have a long, long way to go. Follow your own excellent advice to "think twice before action," and make your future different from your past.

## !Never Done!

What's up Beat it's Rascal coming from the max. These topics are a little off but I'm gonna go with it. Something I've never done that I plan on doing is, well, there's a lot. I want to make hella money by having my own business. I may sound like some crazy white boy, but I want to jump out of a plane. That sounds like fun. But, the thing I want to do the most is get a job and make cool money and pay my mom back for all she does for me.

I would like to know how it feels to make money by working for it, not just taking it. It's something I really want to try. Well it's something I'm gonna do, not try. I will do it.

Anyways, I just found out that the D.A. is trying to charge me as an adult. It's some bull but whatever. I'll get out when I get out.

-Rascal

**From The Beat:** Come on over to our side of the world where moms, dads, brothers, sisters, grandpas, and grandmas all work! And we work hard too. Some of us, as you may have witnessed, work 2 or 3 jobs, raise kids, and save for the future. Although it's not as easy as just taking the money, the feeling of working and getting paid for your hard work, smart ideas, or partnership to improve something in the community helps to put a smile in your heart and on your face.

## My Lil' Surprise

What's up with The Beat. Well its your lil' homie S . Well I'ma tell you about a lil' surprise I have waiting for me back at home. Well my baby is five months pregnant. I'm hella happy. I can't wait for the baby to come out. I hope it's a boy. I'ma be the best father in the world. But first I gotta get out of here. Well Beat I'm really happy. I can't wait to be a dad.

-S

**From The Beat:** Wow, you've got some real changes coming your way! What is the "best father in the world" in your mind? What do you think are the qualities of a great father? Which ones are already a part of you, and which ones will you have to learn?

## How I Feel

Hey it's Tenesha from that beautiful city they call Gilroy! Well I really don't know what to write about, but I got court tomorrow! My p.o. is trying to send me to placement... They came to screen me already but I ain't trying to go! It's either that or the Ranch!

Well everything in my unit is going good! The Olympics thing is coming up, so I'm just waiting for that, then we're having a bbq for the unit, so I'm waiting for that too! But time's short and I have to go back to detail...Peace!

-Tenesha

**From The Beat:** Can you try to use your time well no matter what placement you end up getting. It will be best for you in the long run.

## Court

What's up Beat, well ain't nothing new, same old shhh in here. I had court yesterday and they told me to come back in another month.

About a week ago my mom told me that I had picked up a new charge, but there ain't nothing I can do but to keep my head and hope for the best.

-S Ways

**From The Beat:** The only thing you can do now is take responsibility yourself for what you've done, and know for yourself what you intend to do in the future. Then the court is not deciding everything about your life for you. Maybe you need to change your "savage ways?"

## The Best Advice

What's up Beat? Well this is your homey lil' Chucky. Well, the best advice I ever gave was to my carnal lil' Droopy.

He would always be high, and my mom would always trip. So, I told him to stop smoking weed.

-Lil' Chucky

**From The Beat:** Did he actually stop smoking or did he just stay away from your Moms' house? Also, you said your Mom would trip due to him being high... what about you, did it concern you that your "carnal" was always high?

## My Day

Hey Beat it's Tenesha once again coming at you from that beautiful town called Gilroy. Well today's been a good day! Nervous 'bout tomorrow even though I know what's gonna happen!

Yesterday I went to choir and signed up for that choir thing they're having on Sunday! I just decided to 'cause somebody I know is going! Well anyways that's all I have for today. Till next time!

-Tenesha

**From The Beat:** There you go, living your life even though you're locked up! You talk about the Olympics, a bbq, and now the choir. We think it's great to take the opportunities given to you—inside and out.

## Same Ol' Thangs

Locked up for the last three months. Now I'm sitting in the max unit waiting to be sent to prison. At my last court date, I found out that I got another felony. Now I'm at six felonies.

I realize that this is the end for me. I'm looking at years in either Folsom or San Quentin. I took everything for granted. I have a son, a lady, my homies, and my family.

As I await my long sentence, I lift weights and wait for the day I get shipped off. I promised my mom that I'd be something in life so I'm gonna try to do something with my time here.

**-Reaper**

**From The Beat:** Oh dear...Please keep writing to us, to your family, and to folks who don't want you to disappear just because you are going behind bigger bars and taller walls. We encourage you to take the promise that you've made to your mother to heart and keep it at the top of your thoughts from now on. It maybe one open-ended promise, but it may help you to get through the tough times to follow.

## Fun Without Drugs

The way I like to have fun without drugs: I love to play sports and just hang out with my homeboys and my home girls. My family is the most important thing. I love chilling with my little son Eli. He is the smartest child you can ever see. He still baby talks but he hella can understand everything you say.

My Grandpa is sick and I love him so much. Now I have to do some time for some petty shhh I did. This county is hella whack when you're locked up cause they don't even give a crap where they send you.

I want to just try to get out as fast as I can so I can spend time with my familia and try to build a better relationship with my Mom without me being hella stupid drunk all the time.

I'm going to get back into school and get a good, well paying job to economically support my family. Thank you Beat, stay para arriva (stay up) and to those who know me be cool.

**-White Boy**

**From The Beat:** We feel you man, Family is important. Your Grandpa's still here and full of wisdom. Write him and ask him for more. You've also got your Mom and your son out here. That's the past, present and future all at once. Your life is what you make it... you're in control... not the homeboys or the hood or anything that will take you away from your true loved ones. YOU!!! What are you going to do with yourself? Think about it, come up with a plan, make those tough decisions and follow through.

## The Best Advice I Ever Gave

The best advice I ever gave someone was to always show respect for others and to always have respect for themselves. I always tell that to younger kids around me and I tell that to my homies.

They take my advice because they know it's good advice and that it's true. I'm glad they take my advice because I don't want them to get in trouble and to make themselves look bad.

I use this advice to because you need to have respect for others, because everything goes by respect in life. So that's it for my topic, so later Beat. Stay up.

**-David**

**From The Beat:** Yeah David, respect is a big thing. It can save your life. Being that you're able to have those youngsters listen to you is also big. People watch you and if they don't see you practice what you preach they lose respect. You have put yourself in leadership role, so keep feeding your young homies that positive advice. Make sure you walk what you talk.

## We Pushed Him To Go Back

I remember when me and my homies we're drinking. One of my homies had an OT from the Ranch and was kicking. That fool was telling us how good it felt to be on the outs and that he only had two months left in the Ranch.

We shouldn't have let that fool drink more than two tall cans because he started telling us that he wasn't going back to the Ranch. I guess he thought we were gonna be cool with it; instead, we told him we were gonna smash on him if he didn't go back. Anyways he ended up going back to the Ranch. I feel like I helped him out because he would have failed the Ranch.

**-Smiley**

**From The Beat:** That was a good thing you guys did to him. Who knows what could have happened to him if you guys hadn't pushed him to go back. Has anyone done something like this to you? It seems like you guys care about your friends. But do you care about yourself?

## Good Times Without Drugs

I have had many good times without using drugs whether it be with a jaina or just with the loved ones. The most recent time I say was in here with me and my homey. We were talking about something on the outs and all the good times out there. But yeah, I'm locked up though, and I don't limit myself from having good times.

**-H-Man**

**From The Beat:** We hope you have a lot more good times, and we're glad you know that drugs aren't required to have them.

## Having Fun Without Drugs/Alcohol

What's up Beat? Today topic is having fun without drugs/alcohol. The last time I didn't use drugs was when I went to the church with my lady. That was the last time I had fun without drugs.

**-D**

**From The Beat:** That sounds like a good time. You should do that often and try other positive things as well.

## My Little Sister

Hush my little love now don't you cry

Everything's gonna be alright

You're my little sister

And I'm gonna love you till the end of time

I know that pretty soon we're gonna be together

But just know that I'm gonna love you forever.

**-Alejandro**

**From The Beat:** What more can we add to that? Nice poem. Now you just need to get and stay out so you can be out there looking after your little sister.

## The System

What's cracking, this is Richy from Gilroy. I'm gonna write about the system. I think the system is a set-up. The reason I think the system is a set-up is because I can't get out.

They keep trying to get (me). They keep trying to set you up because first you have to try to get off E.M.P. (Electronic Monitor Program). Then they send you to the ranch. The end.

**-Richy**

**From The Beat:** We hate to hear bad news Richy, but first of all in order to be on E.M.P one has to do something against the law. They don't just snatch people up off the streets and slam a monitor on them. Secondly, if one stays out of trouble and successfully completes the Electronic Monitor Program they'd have no other reason to send one to the ranch. If the system is a set up then why keep falling into their traps?

## My Loved Ones

Missing my loved ones as the days go by. I can't wait to get to the Ranch so that I can get O.T.'s and see my family. It's hard being without them and it hurts to get those depressing letters at night.

When I get out, I'm gonna focus on me and get my life together, so that I can have things in life that I worked for. That would make my mom proud of me and not only that, but I would make myself proud! So when I finally get that day to where I get to walk free again, that's what I plan on doing!

**-Anonymous**

**From The Beat:** That's right! We like your enthusiasm! It's time to make them feel proud of you. But, what are your plans? Are you sure you'll do what you're saying right now? Many have said the same thing and come back. Will you be one of those? We hope not! Stick to your plans.

## Advice Gives

I gave advice to someone once.  
I told them to live their own life,  
and not to let anyone else define who they are.  
Take my advice. And yes my advice I do follow.

**-Snowflake**

**From The Beat:** Good advice! But if you do follow your advice, what are you doing here?

## The Best Advice

The best advice I ever gave was to my little sister. I told her to never be like me. I told her not to fight, not to get kicked out of school, and listen to our mom.

**-Andrew**

**From The Beat:** Usually people don't learn by being told. Anyone can stand on the side of the path, like a street sign, and point in the direction to go. People are more apt to follow the footprints left in the sand by someone who has been down the path.

## Violence All Around Me

It's tight that we recognize someone influential like Tupac Shakur. All of my life, I grew up around drugs, violence, and racism. I have seen some of my best friends die in front of me. I have seen more than half of my homies go to jail or the pen. Some are doing life or a couple years like my brother. Oh ya, free my brother! Finally R.I.P to Tupac Amari Shakur the realest ninja I have heard of and a mentor, and an influential person to my life, and to the homies in Juvi. Stay up.

**-Young Ralph**

**From The Beat:** Now you see what happens as a result of violence, drugs, and institutional prejudice...what will you about it? Also, we aren't able to print R.I.P's unless you dedicate a whole piece to the person you're sending it to...

## Bike Accident

My homegirl was riding on her bike and I was riding on my bike. We were going down a steep hill. Then we were going really fast. And then she lost control of her bike and flew face first and ate it.

It was kind of funny until I seen her face and cuts. So I went to ma and bandaged her up. Then we went to the hospital to see what she did. She didn't hurt herself that bad but she almost broke her nose. But she didn't cry either and she was really happy that I helped her.

**-Caring Friend**

**From The Beat:** You were a good friend in this situation. Your friend was lucky to have you there.

## Teasing

In middle school, I used to tease this guy for being fat. I think I was stronger, but he was obviously bigger than me. I think we pick on those who are weaker than us because it makes us feel better or because we don't have anything else to do. At least that's why I did it. When you look around in my community I see cops picking on us for no reason just because they have the power to do so. Does it give them the right?

**-David**

**From The Beat:** Please let us apologize ahead of time for using your piece as an example to speak to some other folks. Why is it that some people think boredom is an excuse to do something hurtful and disrespectful? Also, why is the BAD example set by authority figures used as an excuse for some folks to do something destructive and damaging? When you think about how any bad habits or patterns should be stopped, don't you think about how the solution should begin with you, or someone else?

## I Miss My Boo

I miss my boo  
I stick to him like glue  
I miss my boo  
I wish me and you could fly to the moon  
Every time I think of you I start to  
Break down and boohoo when I cry  
I cry for the lord and say why am I crying  
He says for your boo.  
I miss my boo  
I cry because my mind is stuck on you  
So I cry and let all these runny tears  
Come down my eye cause why?  
Cause I miss my boo.

**-The Lover Girl**

**From The Beat:** You've got some nice rhymes here! It's a nice love poem that most people can relate to.

## My July 4th

It was 11:50 pm, kicking back on the dangerous parts of the city, drunk as hell as we were posted around the neighborhood in the dark alleys. These vatos were walking up to us and we thought they were just regular people, so when I was reaching down for the beer, I grabbed it. I was coming back up and I look around and seen the vatos like 10 feet from us. They stopped to look at us and we asked, "Where you vatos from?" They didn't say anything.

They looked at each other and pulled out a double barrel shot gun. He reloaded and started blasting, so we were running. I threw the bottle on the floor and the other vato busted out a 9 millimeter and started blasting. So when I was running, the vato with the 9 hit me on the leg. So I was on the floor crawling for my life. I heard the vato say, "I got him," so I was crawling under a van. My head was sticking out, and the light in front of the house turned on, so he got paranoid and took off running. The vato with the shot gun ran up to me and put the barrel in my face, but didn't shoot. He took off running, so I crawled from under the van. They seen me on the floor and called the ambulance. They got there and took me to the hospital.

So close to dying that night, but I didn't, so what can I say for what happened — that shhh happens.

**-Sharky**

**From The Beat:** Yes, it's true that "shhh happens," but when you're "drunk as hell," it's far more likely to happen than if you're in your right mind. Sometimes, we make shhh happen by our actions. We're glad that you survived this near-fatal experience, and we wonder how many other children will never grow into manhood because they were not as fortunate as you and are no longer around to share their stories...



## Change

Being born in Sacramento  
Where the bloods rule and the crime is high  
My parents fighting and shouting  
I'm young and don't know why  
Two long hours we made it to the bay  
Where everyday  
I miss the sound of my dad's voice  
Growing up with three brothers, one sister  
And a single mother on low income trying to give her children the best  
But all we do is get caught up in a lot of mess  
Young with a son trying to be a good father  
But living in 2008, it's hard to stay concentrated on my goals  
Being a young'n in these times is hard but being a young black man is even harder  
I feel like sometimes I got to take what I want  
But being locked up, I realized I got to work for it  
Wish I could go back and change, but now I'm just going to change my ways for the better of my son  
I'm going to be somebody for my family so they can be proud  
I'm not just going to be some black man who "tried" to reach their goal  
I'm actually going to reach it.

**-JStunt**

**From The Beat:** So, here you are. You've given some thought about how you've arrived. You are thinking about what you want, presently. How can you plan for a future that helps you meet all your goals and also overcome your existing challenges?

## Something I Have Never Done

Hi Beat,

Me, I have lots of things to do in life, like going to college and graduating from college. But sometimes, people can't accomplish their goals because most of the times they have obstacles/problems. And sometimes, some people make it because they believe that they can do it and they do it.

**-Stitch**

**From The Beat:** Well, after a person believes that he/she can, there are obstacles and problems that need to be resolved.

## Homeboys

What up beat? I want to go off topic. You want to come see a crazy ass unit, come to the max unit. Things crack every day, cholos singing, gang bangers doing jumping jacks; it's crazy in here. People smash their trays every day--crazy stuff. I've got to go, out of time.

**-Rascal**

**From The Beat:** Hmmm. Okay, your piece is done in a light-hearted tone, so you many mean to entertain us and act as comedian. But, think about what it means to paint a picture of you and your unit mates as noise making, crazy, and primal. That's only one side that you see on some days. There are moments when we see amazing poetry, brilliant essays, and sad stories that come from the same group of people. Remember, you are all humans with potentials to do more.

## The Worst Advice

The worst advice I ever gave was to my friend. I told him not to do what his mom said and to run from his group home. He ended up doing a year in the hall then two months E.M.P.

**-Andrew**

**From The Beat:** Does he still call you his friend? Is he mad at you? It's good that you've thought about what happened because of what you said. Will you be more careful about what you tell friends to do now?

## Having Fun Without Drugs/Alcohol

The last time I had a lot of fun was when I went to the beach on 4th of July with my family. I didn't drink or smoke that day but I had a lot of fun because I was playing football with my Uncles and Cousins and we also were swimming and playing in the water.

Later that night we were sitting on the sand and lighting fireworks and watching them in the air.

**-Throwdown**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you were really enjoying your life. How do you get that back and keep it? Think about it and move forward... really live your life!

## What I Heard Best

The best advice I ever got is when my brother told me just do what you have to do to get off probation. I thought about it but I just can't get that through my head.

I'm still trying so I can go back to my normal living. Well that's all. That's my Beat.

**-Smeagle**

**From The Beat:** What's so difficult about it? What your brother meant was to actually follow all the rules and terms of your probation so you won't get violated. And after a certain period of time you will be off probation before you know it you will be off probation. You know right from wrong, Smeagle. Handle your business.

## Rest In Peace, Gramps

Well I'm not really feeling any of the topics today. So, I am going to write about my grandpa who just passed away. He passed away two Fridays ago but the hospital pulled the plug later on, in the next week.

I miss him a lot. It stresses me out knowing that I can't go to his funeral. I wish I could say my last goodbye to him. I pray everyday and night, and in every prayer, he always has a spot my prayers. Rest in Peace Delfin Federico.

**-Dave**

**From The Beat:** We are very sorry for your loss. We will also add your grandpa in one of our evening prayers or heavenly thoughts.



## An Act Of Kindness

The last act of kindness I did was a great one. It was a bit difficult, but I feel good with what I have done. My act of kindness was that I gave this girl my heart. I love you Yvette!

**-Robert**

**From The Beat:** And then you took it away. So, what do you call that?

## Something You've Never Done

Something I've never done is crystal meth. I haven't done it because that's a bad drug because it messes up your life and your body. I have never tried it and I never will. I don't like people that are close to me and do that drug because they are hurting themselves and hurting me too, because it hurts me that they throw their lives away using that drug. That's a bad drug and I hate it even though I have never done it and never will.

**-Dv**

**From The Beat:** Good advice. Don't do meth. Ever.

## A Cry

My heart is broken and I know why,  
I just can't say because then I'll cry.  
My heart is bleeding, I'm screaming with rage,  
I'm going insane, and my mind isn't ok.  
I don't know why I'm wasting my time  
it seems hopeless, and all I do is cry.  
My heart is still bleeding, what do I do?  
Should I say "screw" every one, "screw" my life?  
Do I have an angel looking over me?  
I have a demon on the side of me;  
hopefully my angel will help me instead of letting me die.  
The demons pulling me down,  
God, help me don't let me fall to the ground.  
I know I've done bad,  
I know I can do good,  
so give me another chance.  
Let me pull myself up just trust me,  
I promise I'll do well. Love always...

-Lil' L

**From The Beat:** As the saying goes, "actions speak louder than words", and after reading many of your writings it seems that you speak the words but always end up back in detention? What's going to be different this time around? How will you change to make your life right? Let us know, don't just write about a broken heart. Write to us about your true life, and what has caused you to get where you are today.

## The Best Advice

Just do it  
There's nothing to it  
Don't be scared  
It's not like you'll end up dead  
You never know you might have some fun  
Wake with some girl in your bed  
That's the best advice I ever had  
But when I just did it  
My family ended up sad  
It is good advice just not a good time  
Next time I will just do it jus' not the crime

-Lil' Flip

**From The Beat:** If nothing else at least you are thinking about NOT committing another crime. Let us know how your family felt with your actions, and how you plan on changing your ways.

## Life

Living life one day at a time, thinking about the past, and reminiscing about all the good times I had. The more I think about the outside life I regret what I did, but at the same time I did it to my self and what I did I repent and ask the Lord for forgiveness.

-Adrian

**From The Beat:** It's good that you have come to terms with what you have done in your past. Now it's time to learn from your past and live a better life for the future.

## Trust

So I love to hate and hate to love.

It just happened one day about six months ago. I can't stop thinking about my ex. She was perfect from her physique to her attitude. I made a bad choice and hooked up with her best friend. She was understanding, and forgiving, so I took her for granted instead of appreciating her. For loving me, and giving me so many chances, but then I said heck with it. Got drunk and hooked up with her best friend's neighbor.

So the day I got arrested she confronted me and we broke up. We started fighting and she hated me and started crying. She said she was gonna go out with her friends, I told her she needed to choose better friends because I hooked up with half of them.

I was pissed, so I went out and got drunk and high trying to hide the pain. I started acting like a fool, and got arrested and never got to talk or see her again except when she shows up to my court date testifying. I guess the guy that got shot at was her homie, so I can't ever talk to her again.

I don't live in regret; I just made a bad choice. I take it as a lesson learned. It's kind of funny because she should have known she couldn't trust me. She was all saying she wanted to get married and have a baby. I'm not going to lie, I do miss her. I learned from my mistake, and I won't lie, cheat or be mean to any female.

I got too much love for women, now I know what there worth. I wanna say sorry to all females, but that's not enough.

- Nuevo Mexico

**From The Beat:** Nuevo, relationships are built on trust and not just a one-way trust. Trust has to come from both people, and not just one. The main thing from this is you have learned from you mistake, and now you can be a better man. Now you must remember to receive as well as give that trust in your next relationship.

## SANTA CRUZ

## Paying Respects

First allow me to give my respect and unconditional bullet-proof love. I thank you for publishing such a good magazine. I strongly appreciate The Beat's support in my attempt to express myself. I am going to the ranch to do some time. I hope this gets published and that the homies and homegirls get to read it. Stay strong 'til the wheels fall off.

Life, homies, is what you make of it. Use it for a positive task - to achieve and to succeed. From the hall to prison, you've chosen your paths. I have homies doing life for a color. In reality, we all have a reason/belief, but staring at these walls with collect calls running up your lady's bills ain't the way to live.

For those who have a second chance at freedom, take advantage. Do good for your family. Well, thank you for your support, in many ways. Much love. Stay up.

-Sadboy

**From The Beat:** Much love to you, too. We hope you grow out of your nickname and the deadend of the lifestyle you lead. There's at least as much to be thankful for, and joyous about, as there is to be sad about. Take your life seriously. You've given some pretty good advice to your homies. Be sure to take it yourself. Do well at ranch.

## Happy Birthday

Happy Beat Birthday, David Inocencio, for creating The Beat Within. If it wasn't for you, there wouldn't be a Beat Within. So thank you. You made The Beat Within so that people could tell their stories about life on the streets and the stuff people go through, like hard and sad stuff.

-Alex

**From The Beat:** That's right Alex! We created The Beat to give those incarcerated a voice. Thank you for believing and participating in our program.

## My Environment

I live in an environment filled with rivals.

The angel of death is talking to me.

I hear voices in my head and they won't let me sleep.

In denial, no survival, from what I see in the streets.

Making money selling,

living luxury dreams of a king.

Tell the DEA to snap me into reality.

Slap me.

-Wake up!

**From The Beat:** You slap yourself. We can tell from your writing that you know how. But we suggest that being kind to yourself, and to everyone, is the best way to go. Luxury is over-rated. Self respect is worth ten tons of silk and satin and a fancy car. Self respect is earned the hard way, by doing the right things, over and over, every day. And by being truthful.

## Playing Basketball

I have fun sometimes while not under the influence of drugs or alcohol, doing stuff like playing basketball. Like when I used to play basketball for this league. When I played there I used drugs.

When I play in the game and make points, get rebounds, and play good defense, it makes me feel good. Kind of like a natural high. I feel like a big factor because I'm helping my team win games.

-M

**From The Beat:** When we feel good about ourselves, proud of what we can do it's easier to make decisions that take care of us, instead of get in trouble. Keep playing.

## Good News

I've been almost locked up for 150 days. I've been under the rules of this facility and now I'm finally about to go home. I don't want to ever come back.

I feel that I have changed a lot and I feel that I have a better life outside of this place. I just wanted to thank you the Beat Within for having them publish my writings so that people can read and understand what other people are going through and that they can also relate to other people too.

I won't be able to write after this because I'm going to be out in six days, but I appreciate you guys spending time with us and having your support.

-Clam Chowder

**From The Beat:** Thanks for the appreciation and Good Luck!!

## I'm Just Me

Look I'm not like you. I'm too busy doing me...having fun in my own ways. I aint gotta hit the yay...so why do you? It don't make you cute...all it's gone get you is out traced in chalk or in a green suit...so take it in to consideration, but stay being you cause I'm just me...

-2-Tu

**From The Beat:** How do you have fun? What do you want for yourself in the future? When you're being you, what do you do?

## Be Safe

Wassup Beat, dis ya boi L. I'm finna leave October 17. Hopefully I stay out. I got some advice for ya'll when you get out, stay out. I just did a year and some change and I'm telling you it feels good to be getting out. Stay up and be safe.

-NFL Boy L

**From The Beat:** Take time to think about what you are doing. Take care of yourself and your life. And Good Luck!

## Over and Over Again?

I was playing basketball for the first time without getting high on drugs. It was fun to do it without getting high or drunk.

Sometimes it's hard to not do it drunk or high but it is a fight you have to win to do what you want to do in your life.

That's why I'm always in here, for doing drugs and alcohol. I been in the hall over 21 times and it's the same stuff over and over again.

-John

**From The Beat:** Do you want to stop coming back to juvenile hall? Do you want to stop drinking and using drugs? We're glad you thought of a time when you had fun and weren't high or drunk. Now you know what you could do, if you choose to. You can do it! Many have.

## A Lie

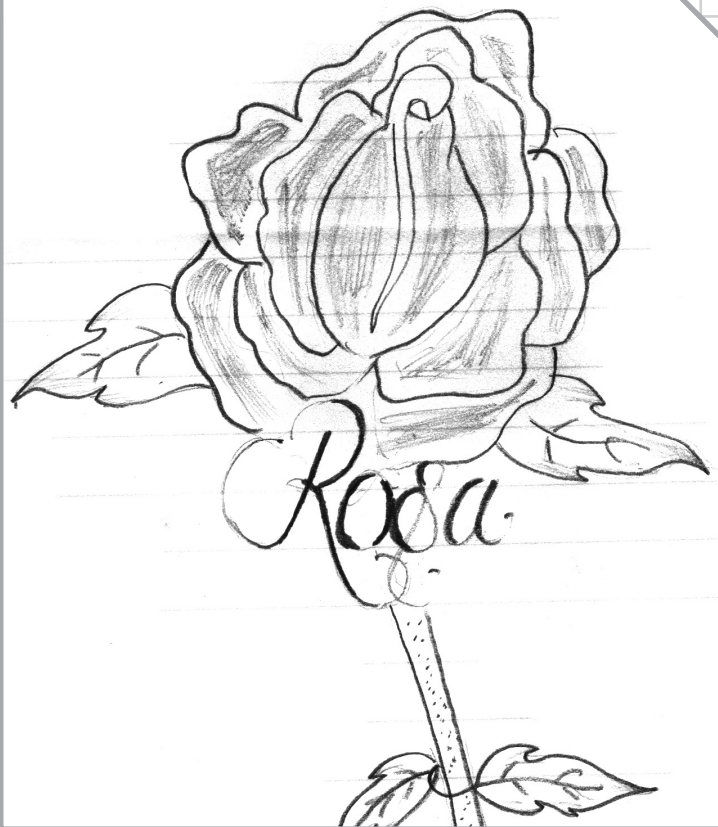
What's cracking Beat? Well anyways I want to talk about lying on paperwork trying to turn cousins against each other.

They said in my paperwork he snitched on me and in his paperwork I snitched on him--that is hecka grimy he's one of my best friends and he thinks I snitched because he got more time but I didn't.

People trying to hate cause I knew he didn't snitch on me and I sure didn't snitch on him--shouldn't believe it, even your boy. When I get out I'll write my cousin hope we're still family though. Gone.

-Spanky

**From The Beat:** It seems like it's really hard to know the truth of what goes down for many people locked up. The best you can do is be true to yourself, stay steady with your own integrity through any storms.



## Advice

Don't come to jail and don't interfere with the police.

-Smarts

**From The Beat:** That would help just about everyone...

## Givin' Advice

The best advice I gave before was to act your own age. I told my little nephew to act his own age because he tries to act grown when he's only in the 6th grade.

I try to tell him not to go around drugs. And I show him what drugs could do. He tells me he wants to be like me. So I try to be on a good route to show him good advice. Because I don't want him hurt or anything.

-Bay-Boy

**From The Beat:** Younger kids do what they see, not necessarily what they hear! Knowing you want to guide him carefully will help you be aware of your own actions.



## Girl

She's a lowlife a dirty down shame  
stupid you fall for the game.  
You was my other half  
now you acting crazy making me mad.  
If that how you feel  
but I don't know if you being real.  
Act ya age not yo shoe size  
lucky for me I'm so wise.  
You missing on the prize  
I was yo trophy.  
You choose me  
then you disown me  
now I'm feeling lonely.

**-Daffy**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you like this girl, but aren't sure where things stand now. If you like her, do you think it's a good idea to call her names? What if she decided she wanted to work things out and then saw this, or someone told her what you wrote about her?

## The Beach

What's cracking Beat me nothing just another day in this place well the last time I had fun without alcohol/drugs was when me and my family went to the beach.

It was two years ago we all went to Half Moon Bay--it was my mom, my brother, dad, cousin, and aunt it was a good trip. We all went in the water and looked for shells and we caught starfish then went to eat afterwards. It was cool.

That was the last time I could remember me and my dad hanging out. Well that's the last thing I did without drugs or alcohol.

**-Spanky**

**From The Beat:** That does sound like a good day. You can put together more days like these, make good contact with your family--find out who your friends are, just as you are. The world is an interesting place, it's worth checking out.

## The Best Advice I Gave

The best advice I gave is to not talk behind nobody back because the person you telling probably gone go back and tell the person you talking bout and you gone get caught up and don't hang out with people that talk shhh cause they probably talking bout you to.

**-J**

**From The Beat:** This is good advice. It's also interesting to find out what else we have to say besides trash and gossip.

## Outta Here

What's good with the Beat and Beat readers? This is lil' Angel but in the Beat I'm known as "Christopher Columbus" or "Tears of Hate" but yea I'm up in new foudns and I'm outta here!

I've been down for 7 months and I'm finally gonna get out even though it's to a group home it's all good cause I'm a make the unbelievable happen feel me? And I can't go wrong cause my time here has been time getting laced up with knowledge.

So I'm bout to get out and stay on my toes even when I'm sleeping 24/7. But yea it was good chopping it up with you and I'm a stay in touch and to all the homeboys that know me stay up and be cool. Much love and respect. Laters...

**-Luis**

**From The Beat:** We've appreciated your contributions to the Beat, and overall participation. Make the group home work for you, and keep it touch. Good Luck!

## Loneliness and Tragedies

I'm once again in my room. Some other stuff is on my mind. I'm not gone write too much this time just a couple lines.

To start it off in my life I have a tragedy. My moms in the quarantine I damn near cried when she told me. I was real confused, like how did it happen? She told me what happen and I though it was pretend, then felt like it was the end.

My life seemed like a nightmare on Elm street, the only difference is I bottle it up and don't know how to put it on Front street. Damn, you wouldn't know how to keep living if you was me.

Pops died in '99 from cancer. That's karma for being loyal to them streets. If I lose my moms I don't know what would happen to me. I'm stuck in this nightmare. Hopefully, somebody will wake me up. Maybe it'll be a phone call, or maybe the sound of a truck. When I'm on I-80 with moms on a furlough. Damn, that'll be the "you know what."

To all those cats that disrespect they folks, when they pass way you'll be stuck.

Loneliness and tragedies, my advice: try to prevent them. They not folks or anywhere near your friends.

**-Lo**

**From The Beat:** We are sorry about your situation, and wish your Mom well. Take care of yourself.

## Speaking On How I Feel

Girls play games they try to make you feel ashamed. But I then change game recognize the game.

She aint gone trick me please, I'm lil Nicky

See I'm breaking out the gate

so girls fall in love but that aint my faith.

So I'm stop leading them on

you fall in love with me something wrong.

I just speaking on the real

too bad for how these girls feel.

See these is just in I'm just be Nick and I'm leave it.

**-Daffy**

**From The Beat:** You have no faith in love? It's risky to let your heart be open, but it's life right? You don't have to play games...but you cheat yourself if you don't let yourself feel.

## New Foundations

Heart broken forever man Beat my girlfriend broke up with me.

**-Heartbroken**

**From The Beat:** We hope you are feeling more together, and can't print communications within programs.

## Struggling With Jobs

Man it's hard to get money in your pockets sometimes, sometimes you gotta hustle to get the bread. Find a job to get the money, work very hard for it.

But this the hard part about it--what happens if you mess up in your job and get fired or something then what can you care for now? Your hecka mad that you lost a job, now you gotta look for another. But what if the people don't like you is you going to get picked for the job?

**-Santiago**

**From The Beat:** You can't control what other people will think or do. You can do the best job you can, show up on time, act appropriately, and be responsible. If they still fire you then go get another job. In some ways it's good to do different jobs because you get a lot of experience. Have faith in yourself.

## Rip To The Homie Pac

It's been 12 years since you been gone  
 you've been my inspiration through your song.  
 You let me know only God can judge me.  
 Help me find the lost soul in me.  
 "Keep Ya Head Up" got me feeling strong.  
 Life goes on whether I'm right or wrong.  
 Straight up got me thinking 'bout better days  
 remain true until the end of time in the bay  
 got tears in my eyes as I write this verse  
 the whole bay knows you was mobbing first.  
 Like you I wanna make the world love me.  
 Overcome this life till I get to the man above me.  
 Survival runs through everybody's veins  
 through every album you expressed your pain.  
 I sure related to it your tracks touched my heart.  
 Lord knows all your songs had me ambitious from the  
 start.  
 I guess this is what it feels like when we cry.  
 We don't shed tears through bloodshot eyes  
 rest in peace while I make a toast.  
 Pour out some Henne in the west coast,  
 California love till the day I die  
 catch you at the crossroads way above the sky.

-Tommy Gun

**From The Beat:** A great tribute, to the hero of many. We like this quote of Tupac's: "Everybody's at war with different things, I'm at war with my own heart sometimes."

## My Thoughts Of Life

What's up beat this yo boy D. I'm posted in New Found's  
 tryna finish this time. Get back to streets and do my thang  
 in the hood. I'm getting ready for the pen. I aint tryna  
 hear nothing, from nobody. Imma mob child and I keep  
 it solid. Shhh gone be cracking when I get out. Cause I'd  
 rather die a beast, than live like a coward. I don't care  
 what nobody say about me.

-D.

**From The Beat:** Do you like your cell? How do you like the food? Are you ready to give up relationships with women? Have you given up on yourself, thinking you can have no other future than the pen? It doesn't matter what anyone says about you, it matters what you think of yourself.

## Check Out Time

It's check out time.  
 I been locked up for 7 months straight.  
 I should've been out sooner instead of getting out late.  
 It's check out time.  
 I did an extra month and a half in this cell.  
 Waiting to get released from this living hell.  
 It's check out time.  
 No more listening to this and listening to that  
 time to make my own choices and live real fat.  
 It's check out time.  
 Time to get out and never come back.  
 Stack up my currency and live like a mac.  
 It's check out time.  
 Transform into the man I'm destined to be  
 changed man but I'm still the same ol "G".  
 It's check out time  
 catch me in the fast lane.  
 Living free like a boss mayne.  
 It's check out time!!!!

-Tommy Gun

**From The Beat:** Take care of yourself and let that man you're destined to be guide you!

## New Foundations

Advice I gave to my younger family member is not try the powder. I told them it's addicting and told them they'll be feaning like a crack head and you'll look like skin and bones and not get any females. That pretty much did it for some of them but not all.

I am a hypocrite keep in mind I was hyped at the time.  
 Boring Beat this week.

-Remy

**From The Beat:** So in the future are you going to take your own advice, even if you're bored sometimes?

## Untitled

Hey what's up Beat...it's me your girl happy bout to get up out of here in new foundations on October 4th. So I'm so juiced I'm ready to get out of here. No more games, real talk! But yeah I'll get back at you later, late.

-Lady Happy

**From The Beat:** We wish you well. Please do get back to us!

## When I Get Out

When I get out I'm 'bout to go back to Fairfield and kick it with tha homies an shhh, just get a 40 and not ever come back, u feel me, I'm jus tryna go home.

-Gino

**From The Beat:** Well does the 40 have anything to do with how you got caught up last time? Figure out what you have to do so that you won't be locked up again.

## What I Know

People say gang members are bad and just say they kill and stay in prison and do bad. I don't think that's true.

Chilling with my homeboys, they tell me to go to school and do what I do, to get off probation because it's just going to mess you up. They try to keep me on track and not let me fall down.

I might be locked up but I ain't fallen. People complaining because they're locked up, but they are coming back next week. You say you're a soldier but can't hang.

-Stunkey

**From The Beat:** You've gotten good advice from people who others might say are "bad." Maybe it's the advice and caring that's most important, not necessarily where it comes from. Do you listen to the same advice, go to school and get off probation—from other people too?

## Friend Or Faker

I thought you were my boys,  
 you said you had my back,  
 I thought you were my boys,  
 you said you wouldn't let me fall  
 back into my old habits.  
 I though you were my boys,  
 where were you when I slept  
 in the abandoned crack house?  
 I thought you were my boys,  
 where were you when I got robbed for my stacks?  
 I thought you were my boys,  
 why didn't you have my back?

-A

**From The Beat:** Is it that they are fake, or that people can't always follow through on what they say. Many times only family sticks around when the going gets rough. Sometimes family doesn't stick around either. You have to take time and figure out who you can really trust and make your family with them. Is it your boys?

## Never Forget

Never again will I get locked up.  
Being in here really stinks.  
Never again will I steal  
But I don't ever kill.  
Never again will I mess up  
If I do, I'll have to beat myself up  
Being here without out my fam'  
Makes me out to brake the windows and jam  
Never again will I make my mom cry  
Because every time I do, I feel like crying  
Never again will I let my fam' down  
Because I can't take it to see them frown!

**-Strong Mind**

**From The Beat:** Never again is great because this is a sense of you wanting to do better for yourself and for your family

## Looking and Feeling Good

Today when I woke up I felt fresh. I was ready for another day in the Hall. It was cool having a job on Stage 2, because it gives you a little freedom from the room.

Everyday I wonder when I will get out and be with my girl. I got it all; shoes, clothes, tank tops, pants, everything I may want. But, I'm cool of that stuff, because I lived struggling so I wear it. Not showing off but I wear it with pride. I should get out on Tuesday.

**-Lil' Will**

**From The Beat:** We think that you have a good outlook, beginning with doing something productive for the purpose of gaining freedom.

## Heart Stopper

Today when I woke up I realized that my girl wasn't by my side.  
I realized how empty I was without her being by my side.  
It's hard not being with her because of the way her body feels next to mine  
because she makes my day and makes me smile.  
The way I feel when she is away it is like my heart has stopped.  
I can't breathe unless she speaks.  
She takes my breath away.  
She makes me weak and I drop to my knees  
and I get up to walk out but she grabs me and begs me please.

**-Bubbles**

**From The Beat:** We hope that you realize that you have more to learn and focus on in here than how much you want to be with someone else. We wonder what makes you worthy of having love if you don't truly love yourself. Have the decisions you have been making allow you to love yourself, and be worthy of other's love?

## Mullah

Money makes the world go round. You hear it all the time. Now I'm locked up 'cause I need more than just a dime. Still you know that mullah will keep you looking fly, and it pays to keep you high. That's what I like so I stand my ground. I may be a female but I do shhh to leave you with style.

**- Queen Bee**

**From The Beat:** Money does not make the world go around. Money is something we use to help the other things that do go make the world go around happen. It's really selfish of you to think that because you want to spend money on things you like, that you have the right to take from others to get it. What if those other people took stuff from you or people you care about? How about trying to earn money to get the things you want in life? Money can not buy you respect, and it can't help keep you out of here either.

## Love And No Joke

Well, me and my brother been through everything together from getting jumped, running from the police, robbing people and also getting beat by our stepdad. I love my brother more than anything in this messed up world. He is my world, my everything. But I am hurting him right now by being locked up, locked down and locked away behind these walls.

I will give everything I have to make him happy. I got him his first girlfriend that he was with for a few days. But, anyways I'm always locked up and he see's me in here. I pray that he doesn't follow my footsteps and my stepfather's. He has never been locked up yet. But I see it coming.

Well, I love my brother and I will straight hurt somebody unconditionally for messing with him. That's why, love and no joke.

**-Joshua**

**From The Beat:** Love is a strong emotion keeping it real and healthy is important. Not everyone could care less for their brother, yet that bond could be so strong and rewarding as you have shared. You are someone he looks up to, so it is important that you recognize that for your sake and his that you strive to make a different path. Remember to teach him to be a strong man; which means a secure person who can deal with conflict by finding other means to resolve issues other than fighting. Allow your actions to speak for you and show those who respect you that you are serious.

## My Life

When I first became a teen I thought life for me was over. As I look back at my life and how I used to be I have realized that my life used to be a lot easier. I wish I had never done some of the things I did to get myself into trouble. I did many things that I can not explain, that have gotten me into the system.

Being in the system lead me into Juve and then from Juve to a group home. It's hard to let go of how the way I used to be a straight a student until I started getting into trouble. Now I wish I could turn back time and collect all of my mistakes.

**-Yo Gurl**

**From The Beat:** People's lives take turns sometimes that can't be explained. You are human and mistakes happen but you are lucky because you are still alive and young and have time to make new choices and new decisions that will make up for the bad ones behind you. When we walk a straight line and constantly look back behind us we always see the mistakes following us and haunting us which makes it hard to move on. But if we turn a corner and go in a new direction, there is nothing there to haunt us. You can be that straight A student again, just turn a corner and walk on.

## Life In The System

Well, I have been in the system all of my teenage years. As I have been growing up though, I have been changing my ways and trying to change my life style. But it is a hard thing to do.

When you don't have a dad or a mom in your life that know how to help you and a brother that don't care about you, it's hard. I hate being locked up but sometimes I feel safer being locked up than being out there.

I really miss my grandma and my mom most of all though. I just wish that my dad and my brothers would change their ways.

**-Natalie**

**From The Beat:** Some of us know exactly what you are going through. You are not alone out there. Part of growing up is doing exactly what you are doing right now; changing your ways as you learn what not to do in life. We know it is hard, and hope that you see how brave it is to admit it is hard and to still keep trying to do it. We wish you luck with everything, and please know that you can not change others for them, just like the system can not change you...unless you are ready for that change to happen.



## Stressing

QVO Beat, today is a stressful day because it's visiting day and I know I'm not going to get a visit.

To tell you the truth I know for a fact my mom is tired of her shhh always being locked up.

Let me tell you what's crazy is I got two older brothers and they're both in the pen. I'm on my way to CYA. That's the recommendation.

I have two little sisters that my mom has to take care of.

Since eleven I've been in and out of Juve. I have been to Madera Juve, Central Juve in L.A. and Sylmar and now Fresno. So I wish I could change and stop the cycle of me and my brothers. Because it is really hurting my Jefita and my little sisters.

I know what you vatos are thinking. I'm gonna ride till the wheel's pero the truth is I ain't got no one to support me but my varrio.

- Puppet

**From The Beat:** You need someone to support you. Everyone does. Seek out positive role models with positive influences. Find a mentor by asking a minister at a church or ask for "Big Brothers" 268-2447. Your brothers are locked up and it seems that this should be your natural path, because this lifestyle is what you see, it is normal and it is accepted. You must fight this by not following their path. It is so complex to perhaps understand, but to begin with the name "El Puppet" is being a follower and so far following has steered you down the wrong road. In order to succeed you will have to make your own path. Some find it is easier to continue as things are, instead of the struggle for change. Please seek out your support system.

## Meth, I'll Never Do Again

I will never smoke Meth again. I have said that too many times before. But this time I am really going to try and try my hardest. Meth took me to a place I never want to go to again. It took me from my son, and it took me from my family.

Meth is the reason I am sitting here today. I'm gonna stop for myself and for my son, and for my baby on the way. I never thought I would be away from my son or choose something over my son, I feel so awful inside but I know I have what it takes to stop.

-Jasmine

**From The Beat:** We feel your pain and know how hard it can be to get away from something so addictive. But you have to stop! It is not just your life you are hurting but your kids. Your children did not choose to go drugs like you have and it is really selfish if you make that decision for them. Everyday that you expose your unborn child to this drug is one more day they will have to live with your decision once they come into this world.

## Wishing

I wish I was at home right now so I can be happy again.

-Ashley

**From The Beat:** Admitting your weaknesses is the first step in being able to see how you can accomplish happiness, not just getting to have it.

## Today

When I woke up today, I found peace in mind. I got released yesterday. The thing is though, that they are sending me to another state to go to a clinic.

Well, it might be good, being a sober teenager. It's going to do me good because I will be sober for about a year.

-Brittany

**From The Beat:** Maybe you woke up with peace of mind as well, because you see that others want you to get better and recognize that being dependant on drugs is a hard process to get out of and takes many different types of healing.

## I Miss My Baby

Hi my name is April and I am a young teen And when I lived with my mom and her friend I baby sat a seven month old baby and I grew attached to her, she was a few months when I started to watch her. Not she has gotten ripped out of my life and when I moved I saw her, and because she got so big I miss her and love her even more than before.

When I get out of my group home I am going to find my mom's friend and be in her life again. Every time I used to see her she would cry for me and when I would pick her up she would hug me. I miss my baby Gorda so much. And my bother Bubba too.

-April

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you have some very important people in your life, we hope that you realize how much of an influence you will be on these young ones as they get older. Do you want them to take after you and to be ripped out of the lives of those they care about too? When you get out, be a good role model to them and for yourself as well. We wish you luck out there.

## Locked Up

I got locked up for doing a crime and I don't want to stay in here for a long time. I think I'll be in here doing some time but when I get out I'll be just fine. I give love to all my thugs if I was on the out I would be chopping it up.

-Kid

**From The Beat:** Being with your thugs will not keep you out. If you are not smarter, you'll continue to be just fine doing your time.

## What's Good? What's Bad?

What's good, Beat? It's your boy Skorch again with this pencil and paper telling you about Fresno life. No, I'm not proud of what I have done, but shhh happens. This is my first time in JJC and it sucks. But I stay posted. Well, till next time.

-Skorch

**From The Beat:** What's good is that you remember how bad it sucks in "here."

## Building My Stage Up.

What's the business Beat?

I'm going to tell you about being in JJC. When you're acting up you'll be in your room all day. I've been chilling so I can build my stage. I want to go home on furlough.

When my Mom visited on Sunday she told me that my brother was getting home furlough. All I want most is to get home. I can't wait until I hit them doors.

This is you boy J.Dogg. Stay up!

-J. Dogg

**From The Beat:** We hear you and we know it is always better when we have something we are working towards. The days are more worthy when we are working toward something. We are glad you have found something to work towards.

## Feeling Complete

Something I will never do again is tweak.

Smoking in the past,  
Smoking every week,  
Smoking ain't the shhh I need  
To make me feel complete.

-Vanessa

**From The Beat:** Thanks for being honest with us and with yourself. It's hard to admit sometimes that things are hurting us more than we wanted them too. It takes strength to get past the now and think toward the future.

## Today When I Woke Up

Today I woke thinking that when I went to court I was going to get released. Now they're saying I have to go to Substance Abusive Unit program in the commit side which is really bad.

The program is six months locked up, when I was just supposed to get released. This just really makes me mad, and just to think of not smoking no more weed.

**-Jonathan**

**From The Beat:** You have no choice but to make the best of the program. If you don't get a hold of your addictions they will come back at you; and your six months will be a waste of time.

## By Pierre

Today when I woke up...I felt bad because I wake up everyday to the same faces and I hate that.

I am used to waking up to a breakfast from my grandma because my mom passed away a few months ago. I feel bad because I have three sisters and when the two year old grows up she is going to ask where her mom is and I'm going to cry until then because I don't want to wake up to that day either.

I am only fifteen years old, living in a world that is so cold. I think that is why I am so bold, but screw it...life moves on.

**-Raemeshia**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you have a lot of responsibility on your shoulders on the outside, and that you are going to be a very influential person on your siblings. We are sorry that it is you that will have to answer such hard questions, but we have faith that if you work on being the best you can it will make all the difference that they had you to look up to.

## Juvenile Hall

My name is Jerry and I'm a young teen...,

I'm in the Juvenile Justice Campus in Fresno CA.

I'm so board in my cell all day.

God promised me heaven, but I'm going to hell.

I'm like a bird in the cage.

I'm locked in the cell, release day that's all I count on.

Let me tell you something real

God promised me heaven, but I got hell in the cell.

**-Ray Ray**

**From The Beat:** Being locked up can make one feel miserable. But on the other hand JJC is not supposed to be a fun place. What are your plans, after your release date? Making different decisions can help you stay away from the cell.

## The Wrong People

Something I will never do again is to not listen to my mom. She let me go out with my friend for a couple of hours and I had to come back when those hours were up but since I chose not to go home on time I had really messed up.

I ended up with the wrong people and I ended up getting into trouble for something dumb and something that I didn't do. After that I ended up getting locked up and now I am here regretting that I didn't listen to my mom.

**-Crystal**

**From The Beat:** Sometimes we make decisions before we think about what the consequences might be. Sometimes we think that our parents always come up with the worst case scenarios and that they won't actually happen to us. But what is scariest is that when we don't listen and don't take their word for it we are gambling with our lives, and sometimes, some people don't win. You are lucky that you are still alive, and we hope that you have learned how important your mom's advice is to your safety in life, even if you don't understand why yet.

## Why Me

I have failed my family, God, and other people who love me.

The most important person I have failed is my relationship with Carlos.

I got locked up. I do drugs. They all wanted me to do good but it was hard for me to because I'm always a frick up.

I have lost all of the people who loved me.

I can't believe that God forgives me for everything I have done.

I wasn't there when my man needed me more than anything in the whole world. Sometimes I wish I could take everything back so I could be there for him and my family. My life is so hard without him here to help me out with things in my life.

**-Candice**

**From The Beat:** We are sorry Candice that you have had a hard time, and made decisions that made things worse for yourself and others. We are sorry too that you can't take back those decisions either. We all have made those decisions at one point in our lives, it's part of being human. But at some point you have to forgive yourself for the things you can not change and you can only do that when you are ready to take stock of what you have learned from your mistakes and make up for them by taking a new direction where you will never make those mistakes again. That's the only way you can move on and up from where you are and truly have closure for you and everyone else involved.

## Hurting 'Cause I'm In Here

Today when I woke up... I thought about the dream I had last night. I thought about my visit that I got yesterday from my mom. It hurt me to see her hurting 'cause I'm in here. I wish I could go back in time; I would do a million things different.

**-Angelic**

**From The Beat:** It's important to realize that the decisions we make hurt more than just us, and we see that you are learning this too. What can you do to make your mom's hurt turn to pride when she thinks of you? What can you do to learn to be proud of yourself and not end up here again?

## Birthday in JJC

Normally when my birthday comes I usually celebrate it with my mom and friends. Now I'm locked up and my birthday is coming up. I will be celebrating my birthday this time in JJC.

**-Jose**

**From The Beat:** What do you do with your family on your birthday? Being in JJC you miss out on a lot of things that you take for granted when you're out. What things do you miss the most? Keep writing, because it will help you get through this difficult time and stay positive. Happy Birthday!

## Thinking I Know It All

Something I will never do again is to get myself into situations that will lead me back to this place. I will never be rude to my grandparents and my mom or even my boyfriend because they are the only ones who really truly care for me and write to me.

So from now on I will listen to them all, and I'll stop being mean and thinking that I am always right and that I know it all when I really don't.

**-Tiffany**

**From The Beat:** We are glad that you have people on the outs who support your growth into a better person for yourself. But are you just saying you will change because they want you to change? Have you considered why they want you to change or what it is that you do that makes you need to change? We can not change for others because we want something from them. We have to change because we are ready to and we understand why it needs to happen.

## Best Friend

Today when I woke I had a best friend, her name is Xadira.

I met her in here, and we became best friends.

I can't wait to get out and we can see each other on the outside.

She got pregnant on a furlough and so now she is five months pregnant.

She has been in here for ten months and she is going crazy in here.

**-Destiny**

**From The Beat:** Having friends is important to self esteem when you are young. We hope that you both help each other make the right decisions on the outs, and help each other to succeed at not coming back here again.

## What's Up Fresno?

What's up everybody? This is Smiley.

So what's everybody doing? Me, I'm missing out on everything. I've been here this whole year, but it's my stupidity that got me here in the first place.

Dang, I'm going to miss the fair...my niece's birthday. Man! It's all bad! But I'll be outa here pretty soon. Yeah, right. I'm waiting for this program to come get me.

Well, I'm outa here, Beat. Peace!

**-Smiley**

**From The Beat:** Sounds like you want to make life work for you this time when you get out. We wish you success.

## First Time Locked Up

This is my first time being locked up. When I got locked up, I was kind of scared because I didn't know how it was going to be in here. I made a bad decision by hanging out with the wrong people at the wrong time. I hope my mom forgives me for getting locked up. I miss my mom because I haven't seen her for nine days.

When I get out I'm planning to spend more time with my family. When I get out I'm not going to come back to this place because this is not the life that I chose...

**-Carlos**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you are sorry for putting your mom through a lot of difficult times. How will you make it up to her? Why did you end up with the wrong people at the wrong time?

## Life In The System

My life in the system is not for me 'cause life in the system makes the days go by slow. You think about and miss the ones you love the most 'cause you can only see them three times a week.

The system is also screwed up 'cause they just want to keep us in here not knowing if we even did half the stuff they say we did.

I just wish the system could see the problems we go through when you're poor and got to do what you got to do make money, when no one gives you a job.

The system doesn't feel pity for no one.

I just hope in seven days they at least feel some pity for me in court cause my brother is taking it the hardest. My dad is locked up and my brother would look at me as a dad.

**-Jose**

**From The Beat:** Things can be tough when you feel treated unfairly, and when you are separated from those you care about. Poverty plays a role in crime and makes life more difficult. If only there were more opportunities for youth to do something positive in their life and also earn a legit income. If you could create a program to help young people like yourself, what would it look like?

## My Life

When I was 12 I started smoking Weed. I used to smoke blunts every minute. Then I stopped helping my mom around the house. After that I stopped going to school. Then I started doing robberies. I have four bothers and two sisters.

Now I am in here. When I get out I am going to stop smoking that weed and focus on my education, and also help my mom around the house.

**-Danielle**

**From The Beat:** What we hear you saying is that your decision to smoke marijuana has lead you downward, and you have recognized that and instead want to do things that will lead you upward in life. We wish you luck in that and remember that all of your decisions will lead you in one direction or the other. Do you always want to make that decision before you find out which way it will take you?

## Being Free

Never again will I get into the place that I'm in now because I am so tired of this program. It gets tiring to be woken up at 6AM and to go to sleep at 8:30PM.

Never again will I want to be away from my mother and my girl, also my son. It hurts so bad to not just go and see your loved ones when you want to, having to be timed at everything. I just want to go free to be with my family and my dog.

Never again will I mess up like this. I'll be disappointed in myself if I do, also angry. I don't want to be here, this is no fun for anyone. Not just me, but it hurts everyone I love.

**-Gabriel**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you miss everyone and that they mean a lot to you. What are your happiest memories with those you care about?

## Movin' On...But Where To?

Hey, Beat, I would like to write about my whole experience in this JJC. It all started when the cops caught me. I did some time and got out on probation. (Oh, I forgot to say that I'm addicted to herb.)

I got out; still I smoked without a care in the world. Then my PO gave me a court date. I went and got locked up. While locked up they committed me to the substance abuse unit for six months. It was all a blur.

When I got out of there I was clean for two months, then I said "Eff it," and went on the run. While on the run all I did was [keep up with] my marijuana habit. Finally I got caught and came back to the same hell hole. I did under two months and then I was supposed to do two months on the monitor, but I cut it and ran again just to smoke again.

Now I am in here writing to The Beat because I got caught again. This time I got committed to sixty-five days because I'm maxing out my time.

This time I'm getting time with no probation.

I have no desire to stop smoking weed, but this will be my last time in here.

So, basically, I gave a year of my life to the system just because of a plant called marijuana. So peace out, and probation doesn't have me by the [scrotum] no more. So later.

**-Duck**

**From The Beat:** You have good writing skills! "Next time" you will be an "adult" - in the eyes of the law - when you get out of here. So next time - if you decide there will be a next time - you will be in prison instead of a kids' facility. It's up to you - a year of your life already served or the rest of your life (potentially) to the system. Is a plant worth your life? If you get caught again, the system will not only have your scrotum, but the rest of you as well. We hope you choose freedom and a drug-free life.



## Locked Up

I started off banging with my brother and the hood. We lived in Reedley.

We were on our way to a party, as we got there we started to drink and smoke. We were there for a few hours.

After the party we were on our way back to the hood. Next out of nowhere the 5.0 came and had us at gun point. They told us that there was a shooting that happened, and it wasn't us. It had to do with gang activity. There were five of us in the 5.0 station, they let us go.

The cops were always after us, I mean it got so bad that every time I saw a cop I ran. I went from a j-kat life to a gangster life. Now everybody is locked up - me, and even my brother. My brother is getting a few years in Wasco State Pen. I got five months for VOP, ever since that day I'm worried about my brother and my grandma. I love those who love me. That's how I first got into the system.

**-Bones**

**From The Beat:** Being locked up is stressful when you're missing your loved ones. Entering the system for the first time can be difficult. The police are always going to be around doing their job, running from the police only makes things worst.

## Getting Right

Everyday I'm thinkin' and wishin'

That I never messed up and got my life in the system I don't wanna go to prison but my actions got in the way There are only two ways out, gettin' shot or CYA Gettin' sprayed or gettin' life, do the crime or pay the price And I don't want to do either, I want my life to be right.

**-Jesse**

**From The Beat:** People make mistakes, but it's equally important to keep in mind how you respond to those mistakes. How will you handle situations in the future differently? What will your life look like when it's right?

## The First

This is my first offence and my first time ever being locked up. I can honestly say the experience of seeing how hurt my mom was to see me in here has changed me in a couple of ways. It helped me realize that I will never do anything to come back here again.

The reason I am in here is because I was drinking with some people and I decided to rob a store with a fake gun. I will never do that again. That's a promise.

**-Joseph**

**From The Beat:** Do you think you will hang out with those people again? Knowing that you can do better and that your actions hurt other people will help you keep your promise.

## Walk It Out

I will never again try to put my baby mama down in front of her friends, or put my hands on her. I'm going to walk it out and be the man my grandma taught me to be.

Where I live, I'm walking with my head down. I don't get much out of what I do, it makes me look like a clown, which puts myself down. And to hear the sounds of the keys from staff when they pass by my cell. Bam, bam, my heart rips out. Never again.

**-Nate**

**From The Beat:** Respecting yourself is important, and will help you learn how to respect others. Do you respect yourself? People make bad choices, but at least you have the opportunity to keep moving forward in life.

## I Wish I Was Just Home

Today when I woke up... I was just thinking about my family, friends, and my boyfriend. I was just regretting doing what I did.

I wish I was at home with my friends and family, and my boyfriend. I just want it to be Monday so I can go to court and then go home.

When you are in here you feel depressed and stressed out. But I know that when you are home you have to listen to your parents. I love my mom, my boyfriend, and my friends. Hope I go home soon.

**-Homesick Chick**

**From The Beat:** Sometimes being in an uncomfortable environment brings out our stress and depression, but it doesn't necessarily mean that we weren't already that way before hand. Maybe you should ask yourself what you were feeling that caused you to make the decisions that led you to this place, and figure out how to get help with how you feel so it doesn't happen again.

## Juvenile Hall

Being in Juvie hecka sucks! Especially when you're a young teen. This could affect my life like my future goals. Now that I'm in the system I'll probably never do what I want to do when I was younger. That's why Juvie sucks...

**-Baby Anthony**

**From The Beat:** Being in JJC can be seen as a listen learned. You can still complete your future goals, think positive. This negative situation can become a positive one. Write out you goals in life, and then write down what you will do to accomplish them. Then with time you'll see that you can accomplish your goals in life.

## Feel Hella Sad

I woke up in a cell and I'm going through hell No support from my family never receiving no mail Damn! How can this happen to me Coming back here is insanity I know I'm taking the wrong path but I still to walk it. Feel Hella Sad.

**-Kid**

**From The Beat:** We admire your owning your path. Looking at our life and our actions is very hard for many people to do but the only way we are every going learn and improve is to study our actions and reactions. Thank you.

## The System And Me

My life through the system? I first got put in the system when I was 13 years old by CPS. I got put in a foster home but that did not work out. Later on I got put in a lot of group homes - keep getting locked up. Finally I got put on probation and got put in a group home in Fresno. Then I got locked up and I really don't know what is going to happen to me.

My dad just got hit by a car when he was riding a bike. I don't know if he is all right or what.

My life through the system is a living hell. I do not want to go back to a group home. I just want to be with my mom and dad for I could stop messing up my life. I hope when I turn 18 years old I could get out of the system as soon as I can.

**-Richard**

**From The Beat:** We hope your dad is okay. That must be hard for you not knowing how he is. Yes, group homes suck...so does being in the hall. When you get out you have the power to "not mess up." It's up to you. If you want to, you can do it. We want you to make it.

## Life in System

Life in system is like hell.  
It's hard being in the rooms all day.  
I'm a wicked jumpy guy.

I can't be in a room for a long time.  
See I was born with a hang-up and a neurotic way.  
I can't be away from the fresh air for long.  
So when I get out this time I will go and kick it  
with my family and do good and get a job and go to  
church.

**-Serious**

**From The Beat:** It is tough to sit still especially when we're an active person. We use this time to contemplate our situation and to make the changes and adjustments so we will not have to repeat this ever.

## Life In The System

It has been rough, my life in the system. I have mined the rules but it is hard because I want to be what I want to be and do what I want to do. But I always get into trouble or violate my probation.

When I get out I am going back to my group home and staying there and not running away any more, so that I can go stay with my grandma or my dad. I wish I could stay with my mom but I would die. I want to do good and to be good and to not get into any trouble any more with the law.

**-Jessica**

**From The Beat:** Life is rough whether you are in or out of the system. Inside can be hard because you have someone watching all your moves and restricting your need to express your identity. But we hope that you realize that when you are young it's hard to see that what you want sometimes isn't the best thing for you.

## Late

I got bars like a prison gate  
Sometimes I think about escape  
But the only way I can get out is through the man with mace  
And they ain't up to play  
Listen to what I say  
Cause if you try to escape  
You just might end up late  
For your release date.

**-Sean**

**From The Beat:** Being locked up can be frustrating and remembering that your goal is to get out helps keep you focused. It's great that you are sharing your thoughts with other people, because staying focused can be difficult for others as well.

## Asking For Another Chance

Hi this is my story. I just want to say that I know I messed up. I did the wrong thing but I want to make a change. I am just asking for another chance. I am not that kind of kid. If you got to know me you would know the truth. I was selling weed. I wanted help my mom out but I see that it's not the right thing to do. I am just asking for another chance to show you that I can make a change.

People might not believe in me but I want to show people that I can make a change. Being locked up is not for me. This is not my life. Being locked up away from my family is not a good feeling. I learned my lesson. I promise.

**-Kevin**

**From The Beat:** We understand how it is trying to help out our family. Sometimes the ends justify the means but we also know we can't help our family when we're locked up. We hope you get another chance too.

## Making It Through The Day

When I woke up today, I looked up at the ceiling and said, "dang, I'm still in here". One day I will wake up and this will be over. I want to wake up and hear them say "you're getting released today".

The things I do, others wish they can, but they don't understand that I'm the man. But until all these days end, I'll be waiting to do right again, and have a pleasant life. Hit me up to make the time keep ticking. And I'll keep wishing to be out. I got nine months to do my time here.

**-T. Hard**

**From The Beat:** Staying positive and knowing that you are going to get out means that your current situation is temporary. How is waking up at home different and what do you miss the most?

## Dear Mama,

Mama, I am sorry for all the nights that I made you cry,  
And all of the times I have lied to you  
About where I was going and what I was doing.  
Mama, I'm sorry for all of the pain that I have caused you,  
Like leaving the house late at night and not telling you that I was leaving.  
Like having to have you hear the sirens  
Hoping that your baby was not dead or just got hurt.  
Mama, I will put you first from now on. I love you through the better or the worst.

**-Thickness**

**From The Beat:** Moms have the ability to help us see the error of our ways. We hope you find the strength in yourself to be better to your mom and learn to respect yourself so that she will respect you in turn.

## Changing...Changed?

Well, I am a father now so I've got to change my ways and be a positive role model to my son. I must make sure he never makes the same mistakes I have made. I need to let him know he can be anything he wants to be.

I am giving up all my bad habits for my son and be a father to him that my dad wasn't to me. I will turn my life around for my son. That's why I am giving it all up.

**-Earnest**

**From The Beat:** Congrats on being a father. It's harder to be a dad. It takes strength to change and you sound strong. It is hard when you didn't have a good role model growing up, but it's not too late for you to find one now so you will know how to help your son. You can make it!

## Fighting

I got locked up for some dumb reason.  
I got into a fight, but now I am going to go to trial.  
The judge is trying to do me in.  
He's requested six months to one year in boot camp.  
Hopefully I don't go to boot camp.  
I would pray no.  
I would lie to God, whatever I say is just BS,  
and then I would end up doing it again.

**-Rafael**

**From The Beat:** It's not easy trying to change when you're used to do something for a long time. What can you do differently next time?

## Sitting in a Pod

Hi, what's up? It's me again. So what's up Beat?

So I'm still here sitting in this pod, trying to get out.

My friends are still coming back. In and out. In and Out. I think that's stupid. This is what I got, only my mom and my little brother that care about me. My homeboys haven't even wrote me. Screw that!

**-Fatboy**

**From The Beat:** We know it isn't easy being alone but we always remember that we have people who care for us. Like they say if we have one person then we are not alone. We have to work to find the good in things in life. It is too easy to be negative. There is plenty in Fresno to be happy about.

## Te Aconsejo

Mi nombre es Marlon. Te aconsejo que para hacer cosas malas, la piensen bien. Cuando uno está afuera, no piensas las cosas, todo te vale. Pero cuando estas encerrado, te arrepientes de todo lo malo que has hecho. No hay que experimentar lo malo para darte cuenta de lo malo.

Tú sabes que no solo uno sufre sino también. Tu madre sufre y ella es lo más hermoso en este mundo. También toda tu familia sufren. Dios te bendiga.

**From The Beat:** Es verdad, todos a cierta edad, ya sabemos lo que es lo malo y lo bueno. No tenemos que experimentarlo para saberlo. ¿Cuales son tus pensamientos despues de haberte dado cuenta de esto?

## I Advise You

My name is Marlon. I advise you to stop doing bad things, and to think about things better. When you're on the outs, you don't think about things, and you don't care about anything, but when you're inside, you regret all the bad you've done. You shouldn't experiment the bad to realize what's bad.

You know that you're not the only one who suffers from this. Your mother suffers and she is the most beautiful thing in this world. You whole family suffer as well. God bless you.

**-Marlon, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** It's true, most of us know what's good and bad. We don't have to experiment to know. What are your thoughts after realizing all this?

## El Mejor Consejo Que He Dado

El mejor consejo que he dado a mi hermano es buscar a Dios. Lo he admirado por la forma en que el ha puesto en práctica lo que he aprendido.

El consejo que me he dado a mí mismo es siempre tener los pienes sobre la tierra, saber y tener bien en claro de lo que soy, un ser humano como todos con debilidades como cualquier otro.

Los errores que pasamos son experiencias de la cuales tenemos mucho que aprender tanto para el futuro como para no seguir lastimando a los que me quieren como a mi familia.

Cuando tengas un problem, busca la salida y la encontraras.

**From The Beat:** Entendemos que seas humanos como todos, pero también tienes que dejar de buscar excusa como para seguir haciendo errores. ¿Has aprendido de tus errores? ¿Cómo podemos buscar la solución de nuestros problemas? ¿Cual es la manera?

## The Best Advice I've Given

The best advice I've given to my brother was to look for God. I've admired my brother the way he has applied in action what he has learned.

The advice I've given to myself was to always keep my feet on the ground, to learn, and to have cleared what I am, a human being with weakness like any other.

The mistakes we go through are experience that we make and we have to learn from for our future to stop hurting those that love us like my family.

When you have a problem, look for the solution and you'll find it.

**-Cristian, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We understand that we are human beings like the rest, but you shouldn't use that fact as an excuse to keep making mistakes. Have you learned from your mistakes? How do we find the solutions from problems? What's the way?

## Consejos

El mejor consejo que he dado ha sido a mis hermanos menores que yo. Les doy ideas que hagan para que ellos se puedan sentir bien. Le he dado consejos a mis amigos y a mis hermanos.

El consejo que me he dado a mi mismo es de no volver andar en cosas malas, y de parar de andar en las calles. Aconseje a mi hermano y me escucho mis palabras. No se enoja. Le dije consejos pero no sirvió de nada.

No me acuerdo muy bien pero ayudé a una anciana. Tube esas ganas de ayudarle y me algre conmigo mismo. Ella reaccionó de una forma agradecida y me dijo gracias. Estubo sorprendida. La verdad es que siempre que miro a alguien, le ayudo a cambio de nada.

**From The Beat:** No entendemos. Dijistes que el te escucho tu consejo, pero que no sirvió de nada. ¿Qué pasó ahí? ¿Te pasó lo mismo a ti también? ¿Recibistes algun consejo, pero no lo tomastes en cuenta. Te felicitamos por el corazón grande que tienes en ayudar a la gente necesitada. Algún día la vida te pagará con la misma moneda.

## Advices

The best advice I've given was to my younger brothers. I tell them ideas of what they can, so they can feel better. I've given advice to my friends and brothers.

The advice I've given to myself was to not to do the same bad things over and to stop hanging on the streets. I give advice to one of my brother and I listen to what I say to him. He didn't get mad. I gave him advice and it didn't worked.

I don't remember what I did, but I know I helped an old lady. I had the urge to help her and I felt good about myself. She reacted in a thankful way and gave me thanks. She was surprising. The truth is that every time I see people that need help, I help them without thinking of getting something in return.

**-Juan, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We don't get it. You said that you gave advice to your brother, but it didn't work. What happened there? Did the same thing happen to you? Have you ever gotten any advice that you didn't follow through? On the other hand, we congratulate you for having that big and caring heart of helping those in need. Some day, life will pay you back.

## Toda La Vida

Cuando yo era un niño todos me decían que aqui en los Estados Unidos, hay muchas oportunidades y no lo niego. También hay más posibilidades de meterte en gangas o en las pinches drogas.

Aqui las drogas son super faciles de obtener. Ahora me miro en esta celda, llorando como un cobarde, esperando que me dejen salir de este cuarto y salir a actuar bien.

**From The Beat:** ¿Estas hablando por experiencia? ¿Que fue lo que no te hizo tomar en serio las oportunidades que este país da? Pienso en esto.

## All My Life

When I was a kid, everybody would tell me that in the US there were a lot of opportunities and I can't deny that. There are also a lot of possibilities to get into gangs and drugs.

Here, drugs are very easy to get. Now, I see myself in this cell, crying like coward, and waiting for me to get out of here to act.

**-Flaco, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Are you speaking from experience? What made you not take advantage of the opportunities this country provides?



## Mis Pensamientos De Los Temas

El mejor consejo que he dado es decirle a mis amigos que no se metieran en las mara porque no les trae nada bueno. También les dije que no anden en el alcohol porque los lleba a la perdición, y no nos deja nada bueno.

El día que pase bien sin las drogas fue el día que andaba con mis hermanos, y hermanas. La pasé de maravillas, muy feliz. Me senti muy emocionado en ese día tan especial, pase unos momentos tan emocionantes.

**From The Beat:** ¿Tomaron el consejo que les distes? Lo tomastes tú también? Que bien que te la pasastes bien con tu familia. Pero se te olvidó decirnos que fue lo que realmente hicistes.

## My Thoughts About My Topics

The best advice I've given was to tell my friends not to get into gangs because it doesn't bring anything good. I also told them not to drink alcohol because it leads to perdition and also doesn't bring anything good.

The day I spend a good time without drugs was the day I was with my brothers and sisters. I spend it wonderful and very happy. I felt very excited and I spend a very emotional moments.

**-Dixon, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** Did they take the advice you gave? Did you take your own advice? It sounds like you spend a good time with your family. But, you forgot to tell us what you really do?

## Mi Mejor Consejo Fue Para Un Amigo

Mi nombre es Jose y el mejor consejo que he dado fue a un amigo que fumaba crack y yo lo aconsejaba a que no lo hiciera porque se estaba dañando su organismo. Se estaba volviendo adicto a esa mierda. El me prometía que no lo iba a volver a hacerlo, pero cuando yo no estaba, él se seguía haciendo lo mismo.

Un día, no sé si fue un milagro de Dios, pero el ya no lo hacía más. El me lo decía a mí. Cuando me lo dijo, yo me alegre mucho.

El mejor consejo que me haya dado a mi mismo fue no consumir drogas ni darselas a alguien y lo tome bien en serio porque es para mi propio bien. La bueno es que me han escuchado mis consejos y los han puesto en practica y yo también lo hago.

Dios los bendiga y los proteja siempre.

**From The Beat:** Que bien que existan amigos que relamente se preocupen por los demás. Lo bueno es que tu amigo, escucho tus consejos y lo ayudó completamente. Por esa razón él ha tomado las cosas en serio en componer su vida. Es tiempo para que consideres tu turno para parar las cosas negativas que estas haciendo. ¿Cual es tu cuento? ¿Por qué estas en este lugar sino vendes drogas ni las usas?

## My Best Advice Was To A Friend

My name is Jose and the best advice I've given to a friend who was smoking crack, and I advised him to stop doing it because he was destroying his organism. He was getting addictive to that shhh. He would promise me that he wouldn't do it again, but I wasn't with him, he would do the same.

One time, I don't know if it was a miracle from God, but he stop using it. He told me this. When he told me this, I got very happy.

The best advice I've given to myself was not to use drugs and not to give it to another person, and I took it very seriously because it was for my own good. The good thing is that my friends have listened to me and have put in practice my advice like I do.

God bless you all and protect you as well.

**-Chino, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** It's good that there are friends who really care for others. The good thing is that your friend took your advice and helped him completely. For this reason, he stopped and has a good chance to live a good life. It's time for you to consider your turn to stop doing negative things. What's your story? What are you doing here if you don't sell or use drugs.

## Pensando En Lo Que Perdi

Que ondas para todos los homies. Ahora voy a escribir acerca de mi vida. Yo creo que he cometido muchos errores en mi vida, pero nada más grande como haber perdido a mi hijo y a mi princecita que tanto amo.

Ahora estoy aqui otra vez sentado en juvenile, pensando sobre todo y extrañandolos mucho. Me arrepiento por todo lo que he hecho. Creo que ya es muy tarde arrepentirse. Lo único que puedo hacer ahoraita es hacer mi tiempo y cuando salga de aqui tartar de hacer lo mejor que pueda y tratar de no volver a cometer los mismos errores que he venido cometiendo una y otra vez.

Quiero buscar un trabajo, tratar de irme a vivir con ellos y ser una familia como siempre lo he querido. Espero tener otra oportunidad con ellos y esta vez aprovecharla y no desfraudarlos como siempre lo he hecho. Ellos son lo más importante que tengo en este mundo y la única razón que tengo que vivir. Ellos son la única razón para hacer bien cuando salga de aqui.

Con esto me despido y no mas les quiero decir al rato a todos los que estan aqui encerrado en la juvenile. La vida sigue amigos.

**From The Beat:** ¿Quien dice que todo lo perdistes? Todavía tienes tiempo y vida para recuperar lo que es tuyo. Si segues con ese pensamiento que los perdistes, los vas a perder. Lucha por ellos. ¿Que no te sientes capaz? Los deseos de estar con ellos los tienes, entonces que esperas para hacer lo posible y estar con ellos.

## Thinking About What I've Lost

What's up? I'm going to write about my life. I believe I've committed many mistakes in my life, but the biggest was losing my son and the princes I love the most.

Here I am locked up in juvenile hall again, thinking about everything and how much I miss them. I regret everything I've done. I think it's too late to regret it. The only thing I can do now is to do my time and to try to do better when I get out, and not commit the same mistakes I've been making over and over again.

I want to look for a job, try to live with them and for a family like I've always wanted. I hope to get another chance with them and take advantage of it, and not fail them like I've always wanted. They are the most important thing I have in this world and the only reason I have to live. They are the only reason I have to get out of here.

With this, I say good-bye and I also want to say that see you later to all that are locked up. Life continues.

**-Alexander, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Who says that you've lost it all? You still have time and life to get back what's yours. If you continue keeping the thought that you've lost them, then you will lose them. Fight for them. Don't you feel capable? The desires to be with them, you have them, what are you waiting for to make this possible and be with them?

## Mi Segunda Vez

Mi vida otra vez en el sistema. La primera vez que vine aqui fue por violación de probación. La primera vez nomas me dieron un año. Ahora ya llebo dos meses encerrado y en eso no me va a gustar porque cuando salga tender 18 años. Cuando salga voy a hacer algunos cambios en mi vida para no regresar aqui.

**From The Beat:** ¿Cuales son esos cambios que haras? ¿Que planes tienes para no regresar a este lugar? Ya sabes que hacer.

## Second Time

My life again in the system. The first time I came here was for violation of probation. They only gave a year for the first time. Now I've been here for two months and I don't like that because when I get out I'll be 18 years old.

When I get out, I'm going to make a few changes in my life to never come back.

**-Oso, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** What are those changes? What plans do you have to not come back? You know what to do.

## Why?

Your vibrations  
 Cause kings to disappear  
 Your unspoken words  
 Of aggression cause nations  
 To bow in fear  
 Your overgrown systems of innovation  
 Persuade the cathedrals  
 Of the natural world  
 To bend at your will  
 What more do you desire?  
 And why are you suffering?  
 I started no wars raining poison  
 On rice paddies  
 I had no point in lighting up the night skies  
 With your destructive fireworks  
 Being reveled at a distance  
 By Marines crowded into mosques  
 You still control vast expanses  
 Of humanity around the globe  
 From Rome to Timbuktu  
 The religious at war

Our next writer is sending us his work from RJ Donovan Central Facility in San Diego, Ca. Mario comes through with some really intriguing writing. First he starts off with a poem called "Why", as he lets his imagination run loose and describe some of the problems going on in the world today. But he really kicks his game up a notch on his next piece and games us up on prison politics. But he's not talking about gang politics; he's talking about 3 strikes law, and also the fact that more prisons have been built and no universities. It's crazy how prison guards get paid way more than teachers do, and they don't even need a college education. Well enough stalling from us, read Mario's pieces and be informed on what's going on from where he sends his latest effort.

Have no more streets to plunder  
 And no more souls to barter  
 The seas shift at your bidding  
 The skies spread for your divide  
 Great nations still wonder  
 Whose mushrooms will first fill the sky?  
 Why are you still unhappy?  
 And why do your children cry?  
 They stand alone with the dread  
 Of confronting horrible prospects  
 Your son lays down to sleep with the grim  
 Reminder of his inheritance  
 But before he annihilates your ignorance  
 He wants to know why you took his manhood.

## The Affairs of Prison Politics

I can relate the affairs of California's mighty prison complex as a growing American phenomenon. Off the top it's a vicious monster feeding off this great nation's fall from grace into the realms of decadence. The big business of corrections is a lavish industry that's burning itself out literary because there's no more fuel to consume. We're talking about the C.D.C.R., the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, which couldn't have done it without the unholy alliance of the C.C.P.O.A., the Correctional Peace Officers Association, a rich and powerful union representing the interests of the prison guards "in a special way."

It's the financial lifeblood maintaining and expanding huge prison systems no matter the cost. It's a wide reaching influence over politicians and legislators. Their power is so far reaching that it has others trembling at the knees, mafia style. 31,000 members strong the C.C.P.O.A. incarcerates a voiceless, uneducated population of about 180,000.

The contemporary correctional methodologies are about making money, bottom line, and wasteful spending as a front such as educational-vocational under the pathetic rehabilitation label that came about during the Schwarzenegger administration. C.D.C. to C.D.C.R. (California Department of Corrections) changed to California Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The C.D.C.R. is a monster of a machine that has grown dysfunctional and unproductive. I say unproductive because the prison system is now a literal "hate farm" which breeds restless misguided humanoids back into society soon to return and eventually stay permanently with the likes of me and other 3-strikers.

From 1984 to 1994 21 state prisons were built and only one state university. College fees are raised every year and education budgets for students suffer. Prison guards are paid better than all state educators; we're talking about three digits a year. As a member of this voiceless demonized population I speak from experience and facts. The educational/vocational program is pretty much equipped with ill-considered educators who feed right back into this "hate farm."

What I'm saying is that qualifications/standards should be raised to a level of evaluating mental stability and capacity; no rejects should be welcomed into an institution

of rehabilitation, should they? It's bad enough to deal with ourselves; we need stable and qualified professionals to lead us in the right direction, not derelicts full of fear and hate who can send us on our way to further our vicious cycle. Lately a few pre-release and re-entry programs have popped up in and out of prison, but these are only designed for short timers, such as "Amity" and "Strive." Amity is inside prison and again, as I've heard and seen, it's pretty much ill considered with careless dubious people doing scandalous things here at Donovan Correctional Facility; it's a scheme.

Now, Strive operates on the outside, providing for the needs of parolees such as drug programs, transportation, etc. This is all I know about Strive. In reality it's all a derelict demographic dilemma, which is in serious need of repair and "accountability." The power of greed and corruption will stop eventually, and until then, there will be more harsh prison industrialism supported by government's "war on drugs and crime."

From 1994 until now, about 12 new prisons have been built in California; and again in 1994, the 3-strikes law came into effect after Richard Allen Davis, a sexual predator with a long criminal history, killed a 12 year old, Polly Klass, then California lobbyists, on C.C.P.O.A.'s behalf, quickly moved legislators and the media to persuade voters in adopting an overblown, all-inclusive repeat offender law that included "all" felony priors, pizza, video cassette, and cartons of cigarette "theft," drug possession, burglary, robbery, etc.

This law was dramatized and sold to the voters under the guise of putting away repeat sexual predator offenders for life under the 3-strikes law. Fourteen years have passed and the 3 strikes law is still being argued in the U.S. Supreme Court under various constitutional violations such as cruel and unusual punishment (8th Amendment), ex-post facto clause, and double jeopardy, to name a few, with no success.

On March 5, 2003, in Lockyer v. Andrade and Ewing U., California, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled it was not cruel and unusual punishment to send petty criminals to prison for life. On June 26, 2003, in Stogner v. California, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a 1993 law, which allowed the prosecution of child molesters when the statute of limitations had already run out. In other words, crimes committed past a certain amount of time cannot be prosecuted. Child molesters are considered the lowest of

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human form, monsters per se.

However, the U.S. Supreme Court held that California's 1993 child sex law failed to come within the retroactivity limits of the Constitution. This ruling is not equally applied to the 3-strikes law and is in complete conflict with the Constitution and jurisprudence. There are other later cases decided by the U.S. Supreme Court that are similar in nature (see In Cunningham and Butler as late as 2007); straight sympathy for the real devil and double standard to say the least.

This really sickens me, but there is always a time for improvement and who knows where this great nation is about to go in its new phase. If one can really understand how a great nation applies its laws, one can see its true character, and it's been said that one can see where a nation is headed, also by how it applies its laws.

On the state level there have been so many political maneuvers and tactics in recent years that on its face sound sensible. And this is to overhaul the dysfunctional system that wastes resources and the lives of a people condemned to the 3 strikes law among others. It is also a plan to bail out and recover the states runaway budget crisis, which is on its way to bankruptcy. While the Schwarzenegger Administration talks about prison reform, rehabilitation and prison population cuts, California is still the recipient of a skewed state government, and the guards powerbase

is still unmatched, a whole network of C.C.P.O.A. owned lawmakers are still in Sacramento waiting to do its bidding for the guards. Right now this and 5.5 billion enterprise is running away while holding the state hostage and soon enough they will run dry. No more fuel to keep it going until they pay their own due deficit. Right now they are carefree about this because they see it as not their problem anymore. They only have a year left until the next administration comes in to worry about it. Schwarzenegger's words had good intentions, but ultimately his actions didn't. He compromised time and again with the C.C.P.O.A. as few as last week with the budget deal. It sounded good but no real commitment.

In 1998 (People v. Deloza) 18 Cal. 4th 585,600 (Justice Mosk concurring)... "The basic concept underlying the 8th Amendment is nothing less than the dignity of man, while the state has the power to punish, the amendment stands to assure that this power be exercised within the limits of civilized standards." I'm not giving in to this madness. I've risen up to a level of learning and observing, now I'm content with my alignment into clarity. I see drastic changes in the horizon, either bad or good. Who can tell. But I'm leaning towards good because in a drastic way, before things can change for the better, sometimes things have to get really, really bad. Peace be with you all.

## Love Poems

I'm a cool breeze just blowing through your Beat Within space, if you let it be so. I love reading The Beat Within. To tell you the truth, it really can help a brother out understanding the kids and appreciate their worth.

The reason I'm writing this is because I hear a woman say, "A man can write the greatest love poem in history, torn from his very soul, but if he doesn't have some material to back it up, it's just talk."

I disagree with that because when a man loves a woman unconditionally he writes to her from his very soul because it's the most original part of love's open-line communication that a man knows. Truthfully, I'm taking up for us guys who can't buy diamonds for that virtuous woman whose price is far above rubies. I feel if you love with all your heart and might, you have given her the best thing in the world.

A millionaire buys his fiancée a \$250,000 diamond. Yes, she will be happy, but a regular Joe who is barely making it sells his most valuable possession to buy a \$1,000 diamond! Question: whose love is deeper?

It makes me think about a little story in the Bible, when all the rich and poor were vying their gifts to the church, and Jesus told His disciples, do you all see that little old lady right there? She gave more than anyone here, and all she gave was one mite, but it was more than anybody else's gift because it was all she had. She sacrificed it all out of love!

A woman knows if you're giving her your very best, even if it's not much, and she will love you for it. According to her circumstances, she may go with the most security, until her heart starts really bothering her, saying, "I can't help but love him" because a woman is emotional.

She may not sacrifice to be with the less fortunate guy right then, but I believe she will find out his potential, and who knows? Maybe a miracle will happen, because the Lord is still giving them out to those who have (enough) faith to believe in them.

## SHAWN MONTGOMERY

Our next writer is no stranger to this part of the section of the magazine. Ever since he sent us his first piece of work, 'till now, Shawn has been very consistent on dropping knowledge, advice, and straight up telling it like it is. He's an O.G. has spent 15 plus years incarcerated and is still doing time. He advises a lot of you young men and women to not make the same mistakes he made. On top of all that he always writes about various topics that no other writer seems to touch. So give it up for Shawn as he sends his writing all the way from Union Correctional Institution in Raiford, Florida.

## Little Sisters

I was just talking to a cute 20-something-year-old Black young lady who is a nurse. She said something profound to me that really pierced me. She said, "Montgomery, Black girls don't know what to do with themselves. Outside of shopping, trying to catch a boyfriend, getting hair and nails done, going to a movie or club, what else is out there for them? I guess they look at the videos they see-images of them defining who they are."

No guidance? Is the bar so low for them? I suggested to my sisters in The Beat Within that instead of going to a club trying to find someone to help them get their groove back, why not think out of the box? Why not go where good people are doing good things? Why not volunteer to work at a children's hospital or day care center or a senior citizen's home? Or help teach? Just do something for others, not just for yourself. It would be so fulfilling.

In fact, that's what I long to do in this part of my life-just loving on mankind and building my highway to heaven. Who knows, little sisters, you just might find a life partner on that road who is going your way.

Remember that we Black Americans are strong and magical, but we still have to support each other and be kind to one another. Other ethnicities do it. It's a cool thing. Trust me. Don't get so grand that you forget your own; they don't forget their own. If they say, hey, you're just pro-Black, thank them for the compliment. If we're not pro-us, then who will be? I love you, little sisters. Till next time.



## Dear Young Homey

I am you but many years later  
I am you in the mist of the storm coming back to warn you  
Even though you'll stay strong like the last Raider  
8 years from now it's going to be hard to smile  
You'll make it to be a grown man  
Even though you never seen yourself as a child  
I am what you'll become  
After all the gunshots, enemies drop, and homies in the grave  
I'm you when the cell door has been locked  
And your closest relative has passed away.  
Young homey these are the thoughts  
You'll have as your soul begins to rot!  
You'll begin to plot  
But you'll be in a spot where dreams seem to be impossible  
No matter how hard you try they'll always be another obstacle  
Young homey I ain't saying that you ain't gone make it  
I'm just letting you ain't gone like it  
And I'd prefer if you never knew how hard living in a cage is!  
And the homies who survived  
And females who you told lies  
I ain't heard from them in years.  
The courts got a law called "Prop 21"  
It allows them to give a young homey 25 years  
They'll try you as an adult against 12 white folks who they'll call you peers  
When it's all said and done you'll have 54 years  
But have learned you was just a kid!  
Lost trial but couldn't cry cause you never fear  
Young homey after all this you still won't give up  
Because "giving up" just ain't in you  
Young homey the glitter ain't gold  
I'd prefer if this wasn't something you never had to go through.

Even more powerful writing from M. Bell who is sending his thoughts from a Correctional Facility in Lancaster, California. M. Bell who is also known as Knucklehead just came across the pages of our publication and has delivered some outstanding writing. He writes because he really respects all you young writers that pour out your feelings on paper. It takes a lot for someone to express their true feelings in a society where we all look at each other weird if we do. Knucklehead on the other hand doesn't give a damn and speaks straight from the heart. He brings you a real dose of reality as he's in prison for the next 50 plus years and tells you what he has learned throughout his journey.

## Dear Beat Within

Hello, I hope that this letter finds All of The Beat Within staff in the best of health and spirit's. As for myself, I'm somehow finding a way to survive in the mist of these four confining walls.

Well before I continue please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Michael "Knuckle Head" Bell. I am a prisoner currently incarcerated at Lancaster State Prison. I was recently in the hole and that is where I had the pleasure of reading my first Beat Within. It was a wonderful read but I was surprised to read that your publication has been out for 10 years and that this was the very first time that I've heard of it.

I am an inspiring writer so I can easily appreciate all of what the youth had to say. I think that it is very important for the youth to have a voice and that's what you've done with The Beat Within, so thank you for that. I can especially appreciate what the youth had to say as well as relate to them because I myself have been locked up since the age of fourteen. I was tried as an adult and sentenced to 54 years. I am now 22.

Through out my incarceration my emotional journeys have taken me down many turns, but no matter what I've always found a way to write. I've even wrote poem's on toilet paper, (smile), I'm serious though. I would like nothing more than to have the opportunity to share my writing with The Beat Within readers. I call my writing abstract poetry and I will be enclosing three of my abstract pieces.

I've had a passion for writing since the age of 10, but I didn't have The Beat Within to encourage me or to give me constructive criticism back then. I hope that everyone can appreciate the opportunities The Beat Within gives. Well I'm going to bring this to a close. I hope that soon I'll see one of my pieces in The Beat Within, but if not thank you for taking the time out to read my letter.



## Survivalist

Persecute not, for I am not a criminal. I am simply a survivalist whom will commit a crime to survive! Doomed to death I am in your eyes. Your despise is displeasing. You see my demise as a way of emotional healing, ultimately killing any chance of change. Killing any chance I had at proving my innocence now that the facts have been rearranged!

Change, life has been rearranged. So as the years pass I grow more and more estranged from my family. Society's misfit sentenced to solitary confinement. Left to ponder. Will justice ever fine me? Will justice stand behind me as I moved forward in hope of making progress?

Waking up is taking a step, and everyday I awake, I awake with less! I awake so I should consider myself blessed, though stress has now taken its toll. Everyday a stressful situation comes knocking at my door. The land of the lost has puzzled me. A conviction makes you not trust me? But even Jesus has been this side of the law. If you've never seen this side of life, I suggest you pause before making a judgment! For I am a survivalist not a criminal!

## Dear Pops

For years I've wanted to speak, but honestly, I didn't know what to say  
I'm 22 years of age and it's been years since I visited your grave  
Sorry...when you passed away, my life took a turn for the worse  
Everyday Moms told me she hated me  
So I always felt like I was cursed since birth  
The only question I've constantly asked was "Why me??"  
I felt like a victim, you chose to be a "G"  
Not knowing that your choices would affect me  
And forced me into the crushing arms of the streets  
Resulting in a life sentence at age fourteen  
Damn, pops! I often ask myself what would I have done if I were you?  
I honestly don't know  
And not knowing is the hardest part for me  
How can I truly know myself when the biggest part of me is missing?  
I have only a couple of memories of you  
But I often find myself reminiscing

Especially as I grow in age, as my heart grows cold with rage  
As I sit in a cage, I wonder how much am I like you  
Is it your fault that I'm like this?  
Should I hate you?  
I guess anger and indecision is all a part of the confusion  
And why I didn't know what to say  
Honestly pops, I'm scared to have kids of my own  
Not knowing if I'll pass on this "curse"  
I wouldn't know what to do if my kids had to travel this funky up road  
They say hindsight is 20/20 I'm now 22  
So I guess I'm 2 steps ahead of the game  
Thanks for that  
Am I at the end of an era? Last of a dying breed or legacy?  
Please don't be mad at me because I tried  
But couldn't fully walk in your shoes  
When you took a loss, I also took a loss  
So why risk exposing New Life to our losses...our curse?  
I can promise you that I will never forget you  
And as long as I breathe, your memory will continue  
I will always ask questions, not fearing the answers  
In hopes of one day finding the Truth...sleep well.

*Honestly pops, I'm scared to have kids of my own  
Not knowing if I'll pass on this "curse"*

## Follow Your Own

Each one in his own time  
Reach one in his prime  
Example of wisdom passed  
From the youth to the past  
We learn from one another  
Wisdom can be passed from generations  
In this fast phased nation  
Knowledge comes from all angles  
Part of learning is to know what to untangle  
And what to leave alone  
Grown minds grow further in their own direction  
And mastered for protection  
Hear for affection  
We give and pass on  
We lie for passion  
What sets your heart on fire?  
What is your soul's desperate desire?  
Free yourself from mental oppression  
And follow your own direction.

## KEVIN NEWILL

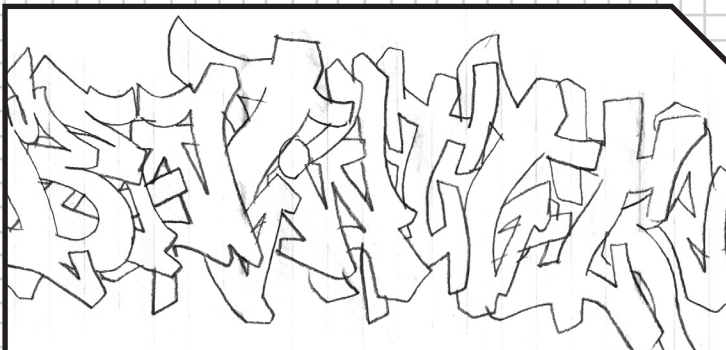
Kevin is a fairly new writer to our publication as he delivers a few powerful pieces that convey a positive message, from a Correctional Facility in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. He talks about being a leader and following your own heart and direction when it comes to life's decisions. In the end, you only have your own heart to follow and no one else's. So give a moment of your time to read Kevin's poems as it might enlighten your mind!

## Exact

Dear Jesus, Please forgive us  
On my knees frozen  
One chosen but in sin  
Trying to wit  
I began as a bad seed  
A weed in the crack  
But you had my back  
To protect you I'm willing to attack  
This feeling is exact.

## Reflect

We coincide coincidentally  
Mentally we elevate  
By the way we conversated  
World change and leaders  
Old souls and believers  
We do all we can what we're given  
What we don't get done  
We'll go on living anyway  
Tomorrow is just another day  
One more to reflect and pray.





## A Date With Death

Sit back and let me take you, step by step, through a hideous, outrageous, unbelievable adventure that hopefully you will never experience. This is a world and the fate of man doomed by capital punishment. The judge states, you are to be taken to the Florida Department of Corrections, where you will be held until such a time where a deadly mixture will be ran through your body, until you are pronounced "dead", May God have mercy on your soul. You are then sent to Florida State Prison (F.S.P.) and placed on G- Wing, in a 9x6 foot cell, where you will spend 164 out of 168 hours a week, of the most miserable force of confinement there is.

You will be housed here at F.S.P until room is available at Union Correctional Institution (U.C.I) where 300 plus death row inmates are housed awaiting the final outcome of their appeals. You may sit in one of these cells 10, 15, 20, even 25 years awaiting the final decision.

Over these years you will make friends with some of these men, and you will watch as some of these men deteriorate under the imminent imperil of death, or the pressure of existing year in and year out in a 9x6... 54 square foot cage. Conditions the human mind are not meant and in some cases not capable of dealing with. You will pass by cells going to medical, etc... and see the anguish and stress on their faces of men, who know their appeals are exhausted and at any minute their death warrant may be signed.

For once your appeals are exhausted in the United States Supreme Court your file is sent to the Governor's office in Tallahassee, where it is reviewed. You are then given a clemency hearing. You will be turned down and you know it. Clemency is not given, they're just going through the motions.

So after the governor signs your death warrant, placing the time and date on it. 7:00pm April 20, 2006. The warrant is then flown to Raiford, Florida and handed to the Warden at U.C.I. The Warden will send his officers to retrieve you. They will make a show of it coming 10 to 12 officers deep. Your attorney will have warned you weeks in advanced that your file is on the governors desk, and your warrant is going to be signed. So every time you hear the electric door pop at the front of the wing, you ask yourself, are they coming for me? That door may pop two dozen times a day. So by the time the 10 to 12 officers do show up, your nerves are shot! So they come to your cell front and state, get dressed. You will go through a strip search, be handcuffed, and escorted out front where the warden will be waiting for you.

Officers will be sent in to pack your property and send it to F.S.P. You step into the office, in front of the Warden where he reads you the warrant, informing you of the date and time of your death/murder. You will then be escorted outside, placed in and van and driven to F.S.P. under heavy surveillance. You will arrive at the back ramp that leads to the 2nd floor, this is the same ramp you walked up years earlier, upon your arrival at F.S.P. You will walk up the ramp, and enter the rear or the building, walking straight down the hall, 40 to 45 yards, coming to the section called "times square" an electric gate will open you will enter it, turning to your left, walking ten yards where you will stop at another electric gate, waiting for it to open where you will continue ten more yards coming at a stop at another gate. An officer will come out on the other side of the gate to your right and open the gate with a key.

You will enter the gate turning to your right, entering the door where the officer came from. You will now have entered the clinic where you will be examined. You will then

The most powerful writings in this latest issue come from our next writer who is sending us his contributions from Union Correctional Institution in Raiford, Florida. Ronald is on Death Row in Florida and the following piece that he has titled "A Date With Death," will give us all a glimpse inside the life a Death Row inmate who is awaiting his turn to face his sentence/fate. It is a very powerful piece of work that takes you on a journey. Along with his writing he has included various poems - some sad, and some of love. So with that said, we welcome Ronald W. Clark, Jr.!

be escorted out the same way you came in, only you will not make a turn at "times square." You will keep walking some 200 yards, going through 3 electric gates, passing 12 wings, that house some 1200 inmates at F.S.P. Upon entering the 3rd and final electric gates and walking the final 25 yards, you will pass g-wing, the wing you were housed on years earlier. You have reached the end, come to a stop at solid steel door done in black and tan, with a big black letter "G" written over the top of the door.

The officers open the door. You step inside over to your left is a Sergeant's desk. To the right of the desk you will see a board attached to the wall with name's written on it in black ink. The top of the board had 12 cells listing the names of the individuals. The middle of the board had the same listing. These are inmates that have been involved with something serious. You glance down to the bottom of the board on the right side. Three cells are listed and you see your name and number and the date and time of your execution. To your right is a staircase, two sets, and one going up the other going down. You walk down the first 8 to 10 steps again turning to your right where you see another board again with 3 cell numbers with your name and number and date and time execution is again listed, and the cell where you will be spending then next 30 to 60 days of your life.

You will pass these boards each time you see your attorney, preacher, or spiritual advisor, or going to visit or medical so you will be reminded and re-reminded on a daily basis of the date and time your life will end. You step towards the board a gate door is opened manually by key. You step through, another Sgt Desk is to your right. This is for that oversees these 3 cells, which are called "Death Watch Cells." To your left a gate is again opened with a key. You walk through and down about 12 to 14 feet where the door is opened to your left. You step through and the officer shuts the bar doors removing the cuffs and chains.

You looks around at the sink, toilet, and steel bunk with the thin mattress that you've grown so accustomed to over the year's, but your thoughts immediately go to all of the men you've know over the years and how many have spent their last remaining days sleeping restless nights on that very bunk.

You pace back and forth with so many thoughts, thoughts of the past, of the present, of the remaining 30 to 60 days, and the strength and courage you must show for the sake of your family and loved ones, and the pain and anguish you must endure. Your property arrives, and is placed in the cell with you. So you take our your pen and paper, and start writing letters, saying your goodbyes to family and friend's that are unable or unwilling to come visit. The days have passed rather fast, and you're down to the last week. Seven day's left to live. Your property is removed from the cell, placed outside the cell in cardboard boxed. An officer will now be stationed in front of your cell, watching and logging down your every move for the next seven days.

So he will hand you a book, paper, pen, etc. from you property, you will return it when you are finished.

Today is Friday, April 14, 2006, the last Friday you will



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be alive. The next few days pass. Your thoughts continue to fall upon that your, last Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. You are measured for your clothes that you will be executed in.

It's Wednesday, April 19 2006. 7:00pm. You have 24 hour's to live. This time tomorrow you will be in the chamber. But, you're now being relocated to the backside. So you are escorted back out, once you step through the gate where the Sgt. Desk is located. You will pass by the board with your name, number, and tomorrow's date on it, with the execution time 7:00pm. You walk another 12 to 14 feet and come to a solid door, it's opened, and you step through, walking 3 feet, turning to your right, walking through another gate, 12 to 14 feet. 3 cells are located to your right, but 3 to 4 feet ahead of them is a large sliding gray door.

Behind this door is Florida's death chamber, that has seen many souls taken. Some guilty, some not, but all the same, taken under the false pretense of Justice. You enter one of the three cells. You're given your last meal. Also, you will soon have a last visit with your family. So you will be escorted up front. The visit is anything but a joyous occasion, for you see the pain and anguish all over your loved ones faces. That's when you realize that your suffering ends in less than 24 hours, but your families suffering will continue on. You think to yourself, is it I, or they who are truly sentenced?

The visit ends what is a tearful goodbye. You're escorted back to the cell. People you've never seen are constantly coming down to see you. Most are big wigs from Tallahassee. You get a restless night's sleep. Awakening to your big day, Thursday, April 20, 2006. You have less then 12 hours left to live. The time tick's off, minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour, it is now 6:00pm. The medical tech comes to see you. He looks at your arms to see where he is going to hook up the I.V. The big gray door slides open and the gurney is pushed out and in front of the cell. Your standing at the bar's, looking at the gurney, officer's putting leather straps on your wrists, ankles, across your chest, and even your

forehead. The medical tech hook's two I.V.'s and a back up to ensure everything in their plan goes well.

You're pushed into the execution chamber. People are hooking tubes to the I.V. You look into a mirror that is positioned overhead at an angle. You see a curtain. You hear a slam, as the large gray door to the chamber is being shut. Your heart is racing faster than it ever has. The Warden gives the signal, you see the curtain being pulled back. It is opened to reveal many faces, some recognizable, most not: Victim's family, your two witnesses and members of the media. The Warden start's off reading the warrant, stating that you have been convicted by a jury of your peer's and sentenced to die, on this 20th day of April, 2006. May God have mercy on your soul. Then it states, do you have any last words.

Upon your final words, the Warden gives a hidden signal to the executioner releases a deadly mixture that is now running through the tubes, into your veins. A lost thought goes to your loved one's. You look at the many faces staring back at you. Closing your eyes for the final time. The medical tech comes in at 7:19p, taking your vital sign's and pronouncing you dead at 7:23pm. The curtain closes, and the witnesses are taken out of the rear of Q-wing to awaiting vans that carry them out. And the clean up begins, a white hearse pulls through the rear gate and to the back of Q-wing, where your lifeless body is loaded in it, and driven off to the morgue.

Within a few weeks' a box arrives at your families, inside are your personal belongings. The deed is done, and the mourning continues. This act was committed under the mantle of Justice, by a civilized society that proclaims the Roman Empire to be barbaric, yet what I just described is the highest form of premeditated murder that has ever taken place! A murder planned to the precise minute, where their fellow citizen's sit around and view this horrific case of state sanctioned homicide. A penalty that is arbitrarily and capriciously handed out to the poor. For the only true equality in the American legal system is the poor equally get screwed by a system portraying Equal Justice.

## In Love

It was cool winter night  
 The stars were shining bright  
 Love was in the air  
 The fragrance everywhere  
 Her name is calling  
 Through the rain drop's  
 That were falling  
 Her body quite divine  
 Pressed hard against mine  
 I removed all fear  
 As I whispered in her ear  
 I'm madly in love with you  
 Oh yes, baby it's true  
 I let out a sigh  
 As I gazed into her eye's  
 Stating, until-death do us part  
 You own one hundred percent  
 Of my heart  
 I will scream it  
 From the highest mountain's  
 I will scream it  
 From the tallest trees  
 So that everyone shall know  
 That I'm in love.

## Insanity

Here where insanity looms  
 In the importable cage of doom  
 Where you shall languish  
 In complete mental anguish  
 For here days turn to weeks  
 Weeks into months and months into years  
 All blended together  
 With devastating tears  
 Insanity shall rain  
 Causing heartache and pain  
 For it shall appear  
 That insanity is near  
 Captivated by concrete, steel, and stone  
 Where the heart shall exist, exist all alone  
 My apparition of hope  
 Is dangling from the end of a rope  
 Captivated and distraught  
 With suicidal thoughts  
 Withering here under the sentences of death  
 Smothered by this cage  
 Gasping for breath  
 In the importable cage, cage of doom  
 Where insanity clearly, clearly looms.

### **Suicidal Thought's**

I'm kept in my cell like I got a disease  
Left with my suicidal thoughts are the way I cope  
Fear of death or just the unknown?  
No, my fear is being left behind steel and stone  
So night, I often, often pray  
That death will come, come today  
And suicide won't be my final way  
Yes, I'm kept in my cell like I got a disease  
Left with my suicidal thought's and tendencies.

### **Life As I See it**

Life as I see it surely can't be  
The way we live life back here un-free  
For this truly is not a life  
And anyone can see  
That life back here just isn't meant to be.

### **Death Row**

Death row is a place  
Where a man is disgraced  
Where flies don't land  
And birds don't sing  
Where there's no love  
For anything  
Where one seeks love  
But cannot find  
For people truly feel  
We are a waste of time  
So you sit in your cage  
Day after day  
And watch your life  
Waste away  
You have 0 hopes  
You have no dreams  
You have no meaning  
It surely seems.

### **My Contribution**

I've seen gray skies  
Teardrops and lies  
The anguish and pain  
Caused by cocaine  
I've seen it caused  
By de-moral  
Some L.S.D. and alcohol  
Trying to escape life's confusion  
Off in a bottle  
Life feels the illusion  
But you can't truly escape reality  
Through cocaine, weed, or ecstasy  
For it'll never, ever set you free  
Yet it will cause so much pain  
And in the end you'll see it's in vain  
For drugs will lead you  
To a dead and street  
The prison, ghetto  
Or death you will meet  
And this is my contribution  
To show you drugs  
Are not the solution.

### **Lethal Injection**

I'm strapped to a gurney  
For my Final Journey  
For all to see  
Premeditated homicide  
Is what it will be  
The liquid flow  
Through the I.V. below  
My eyes will shut  
My lungs will collapse  
And my heart will burst  
And my body will be drive off  
In a pearly white hearse  
In the name of Justice  
Is what they will cry?  
But the justice they seek  
Was nothing more than a lie  
For it was all quite phony  
With false testimony  
The trial was a sham  
Yes, one big scam  
For I had no support  
From the U.S Court  
Who assigned me Mr. Davis  
An incompetent attorney  
And that's why I'm off  
On my Final Journey.

### **Guilt**

My heart is so very weary  
My eyes so very teary  
In a state of deep dark confusion  
Provided with no solution  
Pain running deep within  
I hurt again and again  
My heart begins to wilt  
From the weight of all this guilt  
The day's so long and dim  
I feel there is no hope  
Yet I continue to cope  
My watch continues to chime  
One hour at a time  
The day's they pass so slow  
As the guilt continues to flow  
This I surely swear  
More guilt and pain I cannot bear.

### **My Vow to Love**

I can't promise you today  
Nor can I promise you tomorrow  
Nor can I promise you that I  
Shall never cause you sorrow  
I can vow to love you  
Till death do us part  
I can vow that you  
Shall always have my heart  
So every promise, every vow  
I shall surely keep  
But I shall never promise  
That you will never weep  
Yes, I could promise you the world  
But it would only be a lie  
So I shall only vow  
To love you till I die.

## Loneliness

I know loneliness  
 Like most will never know  
 I know loneliness  
 Like most will never feel.  
 I know loneliness  
 A feeling that's so surreal  
 I know loneliness  
 Like no one should ever know.  
 I know loneliness  
 I know its feel  
 For I'm captivated by it  
 Held to its will  
 I know loneliness  
 I know its self-defiance  
 I know loneliness  
 I know it's deadly silence  
 Yes, I know loneliness  
 I know it all too well  
 For this loneliness  
 Is my deep dark hell.

## The Death Penalty

A rich man will walk  
 And a poor man will die  
 And America will scream  
 An eye for an eye  
 But only a poor mother will cry  
 For a rich woman's son  
 Will never die.

## Clouded Views

I sit on death row day after day  
 Watching my life waste away  
 Yet I think back on a life I once had  
 Where times now don't seem so bad thinking of all the  
 love I had  
 But the drugs surely clouded my view  
 And ruined my life and others too.

## Daunting Existence

I strain to look out, so far away  
 Through the crack in the window  
 At the dawn of the day  
 To catch a glimpse of freedom  
 Far off in the distance  
 Escaping this cage  
 And my daunting existence  
 I can see freedom  
 But only in my past  
 So please tell me why  
 Am I trying to last?!

Existing in this world  
 That has diminished all hope  
 So please tell me how  
 I'm suppose to cope?  
 For I stand at my cell bar's  
 Staring off in the distance  
 Yet I still have to cope  
 With my daunting existence.



## Bat Out of Hell

I was living life  
 Like a bat out of hell  
 Then I dropped into  
 A death row cell  
 Yes, my life came  
 To a halt  
 And I can truly say  
 It was my fault  
 For I was doing drugs  
 Hanging with thugs  
 The price I paid  
 For the mistakes I made  
 The prices were high  
 For people would die  
 Now for another man's lie  
 My life will be lost  
 Thus he does not  
 Have to pay the cost  
 He was the triggerman  
 Enemy one Called me friend  
 And put me under the gun  
 But that's the life  
 The life I was liven  
 Yes baby  
 It was unforgiving  
 For now they seek revenge  
 Through a dirty syringe  
 Yes, I fell  
 For I was living life  
 Like a bat out of hell.

## So Unkind

I struggle with my hopes  
 I struggle with my dreams  
 And I struggle everyday  
 With my life, it seems  
 Stretching one day  
 Off into another  
 Existing in this world  
 For my mother  
 A world so, so unkind  
 Unlike hers this is mine  
 Held off-in suspense  
 Held in by razor wire fence  
 Concrete, steel and stone  
 I'm left here all alone  
 Where day's turn into year's  
 Blended together  
 With so many tear's  
 A world of doom, a tiny cage  
 A small ass room,  
 Nine by six feet  
 Of living space  
 A world like no other place  
 Two world's, two hearts  
 Separated miles apart  
 Yes, unlike hers this is mine  
 A world that is so, so unkind.



I am you but many years later  
I am you in the mist of the storm  
coming back to warn you  
Even though you'll stay strong like the last Raider  
8 years from now it's going to be hard to smile  
You'll make it to be a grown man  
Even though you never seen yourself as a child  
I am what you'll become

read the rest of M. Bell's BWO piece on page 62

